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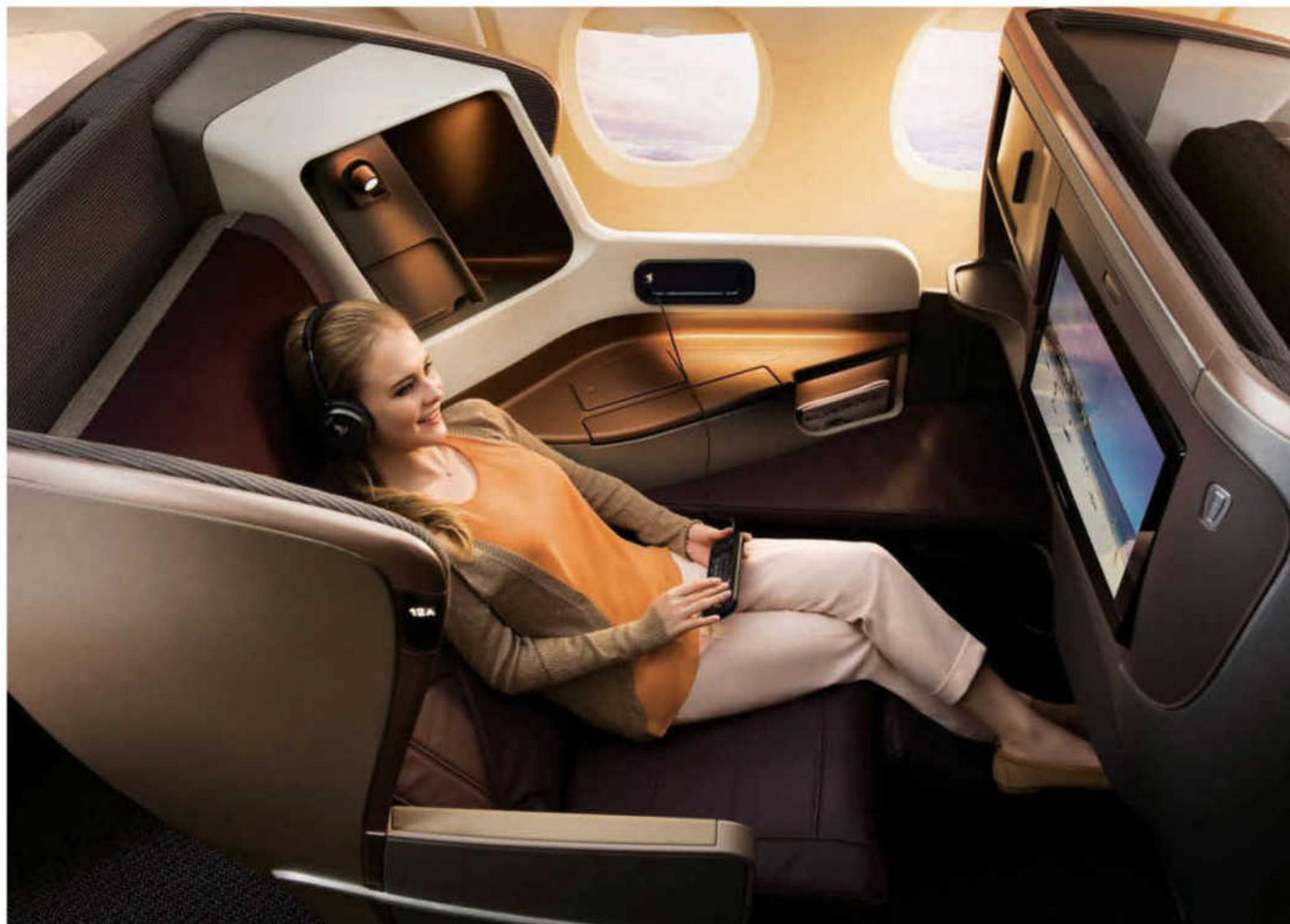
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March

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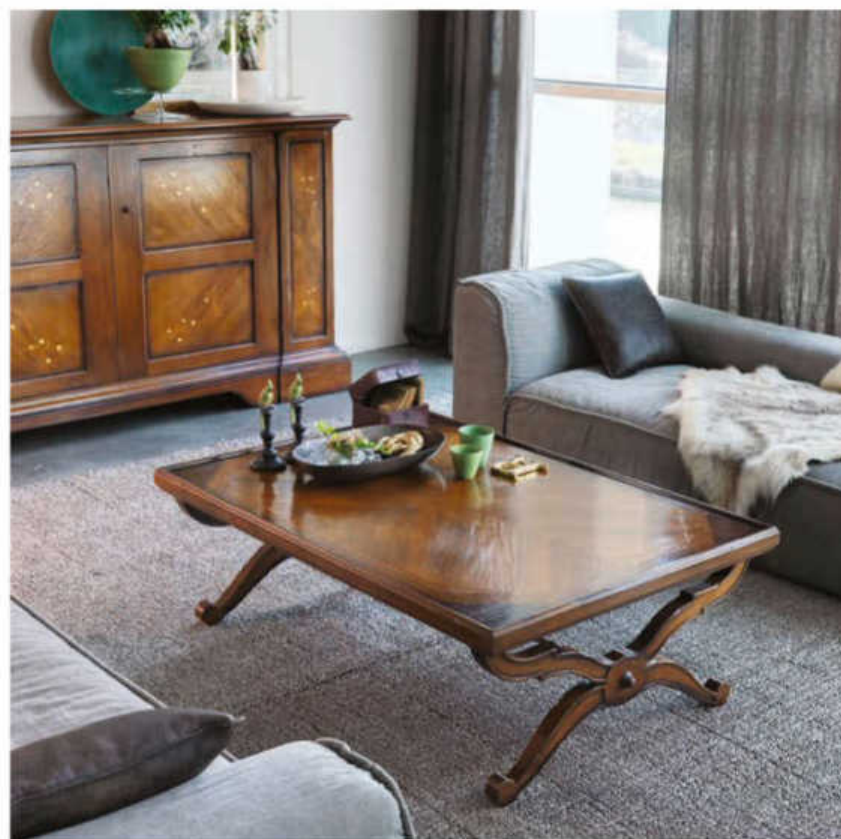
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MARCH 2016

menus

It's a chocolate frenzy this month, so we've added lamb, fresh salads and fritters to the menus to offset the sweet stuff.

DRINK SUGGESTIONS MAX ALLEN



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EASTER LUNCH

Celery heart, charred treviso, and egg salad (RECIPE P40)

Suckling lamb roasted with chamomile (PICTURED; RECIPE P144)

Piperade (RECIPE P142)

Chocolate mousse cake (RECIPE P89)



The flavours in this menu lend themselves to Spanish grape varieties and wine styles. Try a **cava** or other light, dry sparkling wine – or a bone-dry **fino** or **manzanilla sherry** – with the salad; a full-fruited, supple but firm **tempranillo** with the lamb and piperade; and a treacly black **Pedro Ximénez sherry** with the mousse cake.

CHOCOLATE TEA PARTY

Chocolate raspberry meringue cake (PICTURED; RECIPE P107)

Black Forest roulade (RECIPE P105)

Chocolate truffles (RECIPE P186)



All good tea parties should involve a bottle of bubbles. Try a young, slightly sweet **sparkling shiraz** with the cake, then offer a small glass of young, purple-berryish **vintage Port** with the roulade. End the meal with an even smaller glass of the oldest **Rutherglen topaque** (the new name required for Australian tokay) you can afford – the perfect match for the chocolate truffles.

EARLY AUTUMN PICNIC

Pea, zucchini and mint fritters with eggs and feta sauce (PICTURED; RECIPE P122)

Chicken, radish and bean salad with tarragon dressing (RECIPE P44)

Flourless chocolate, hazelnut and buttermilk cake (RECIPE P114)



If you're taking this picnic-friendly collection of dishes out into the wild, pack an Esky with some half-bottles and cans and plenty of ice: a half-bottle or two of **sauvignon blanc** and pale, **dry rosé**; some cans of **pale ale** and **cider**; and a half-bottle (or even a can or two) of **pink moscato**. Oh, and some plastic glasses or cups.



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OUR FAVOURITE PLATES OF THE MONTH

ALL THE CHOCOLATE

Some people kicked off the year with a cleanse; I ate chocolate. We've sourced chocolate from more than 40 producers around the country for our tasting on page 76 so GT HQ has been flooded with the small-batch, the hand-tempered, the single-origins and all manner of variations. My favourites? Sue Lewis, Wawa and Bibelot for their beautiful packaging, Fortunato No 4 dark for the 3pm fix and Winnow's Cherry Ripe-esque raspberry and coconut just because. MAGGIE SCARDIFIELD

THE BAYTIME

When is a chocolate dessert not a chocolate dessert? When the chocolate isn't chocolate, but rather the grain freekeh, toasted to a nutty, chocolatey brown, and used to enrobe peanut-milk ice-cream and caramel on a twig of lemon myrtle. Team Noma likens it to a Gaytime; the look is way more Magnum, the taste sublime. *Noma Australia*, 43 Barangaroo Rd, Sydney, NSW, (02) 9188 4100 PAT NOURSE

CHOCOLATE NEMESIS

Bucci's take on The River Cafe's famed chocolate cake is an oldie but a goodie. It looks like a brownie but the texture is surprisingly lush and mousse-like so it's light yet rich. And better still, you don't need to book a ticket to London to enjoy it. Bucci, 15 James St, Fortitude Valley, Qld, (07) 3252 7484 FIONA DONNELLY

I like chocolate but I don't swoon over it like some people do and I certainly don't identify as a *chocaholic*. But (and this is a big but) after

working with the team on this chocolate special, I have a new appreciation for this confectionery which brings so much joy to so many. My chocolate dessert game has certainly received a kick thanks to inspiration from Emma Knowles and Lisa Featherby in their choctacular food feature, which begins on page 100 – chocolate honeycomb, semifreddo and, of course, the ultimate brownie are now part of my repertoire (just in time for Easter). In other chocolate-related news, we wrap up the country's best desserts (page 92), chocolate shops (page 80) and bars (page 76), Annabel Crabb makes an argument for much-maligned white chocolate (page 99) and Fergus Henderson tells of his quest for perfect chocolate ice-cream (page 90).

Also in the issue, *Gourmet Traveller's* chief critic Pat Nourse reviews Noma Australia. Has there been a more highly anticipated restaurant opening in Sydney? I certainly can't recall one. Chef René Redzepi and his talented army have brought all the hallmarks of their celebrated Copenhagen restaurant, overlaid them with a warm and convincing Australian accent (native tamarind, magpie goose, crocodile fat and wattleseed are just some of the indigenous ingredients on the carte) and opened on the Barangaroo waterfront for a 10-week pop-up in collaboration with Tourism Australia and Lendlease.

It's been 18 months in the making, tickets sold out in four minutes and there's 27,000 people on the wait-list (yes, you read correctly) so it's fair to say there's some interest in the project. Does it make the grade? Read all about it on page 63.

Happy March,

Anthea Loucas Boshia

ON THE COVER Choc-malt and almond brownie (recipe page 102)
Recipe and styling Emma Knowles Photography Ben Dearnley
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JESSICA REFTEL EVANS AND MARTIN REFTEL

Jess Reftel Evans and Martin Reftel met while studying photography at RMIT and the couple now work as a team. "This way we get to see each other at work every

day," says Jess. After eight years living in London they returned to Melbourne three years ago, lured by "friends, family and lifestyle". In this issue they shot the city's best chocolate shops. "Bibelot was visually stunning, and I loved the guys at Monsieur Truffe," says Jess. See page 80.



GERALD DUFFEY

A player on the Melbourne hospitality scene for more than 25 years, British-born Gerald Duffey has been ahead of the curve on everything from craft coffee and laneway dives to baking and wine bars. Exporting

a version of his eponymous hit Carlton North bar (GT's 2010 Bar of the Year) to San Sebastián, however, might be his boldest move yet. Falling in love with the town, he "just wanted to be part of it". Get the inside word on the Basque city's tastiest addresses in his feature on page 148.



ELIZA O'HARE

On her springtime trip from Vancouver to Banff aboard the *Rocky Mountaineer*, Eliza O'Hare acquired a new appreciation of pioneers, poutine and pickles. "Experiencing this extraordinary wilderness

on the *Mountaineer* almost feels a bit like cheating," says the associate editor of *Harper's Bazaar*. "But it's really the ultimate armchair adventure: drinking Canadian chardonnay under a cashmere blanket while gliding past rapids and sheer rock faces." See page 158.



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Giovanni Pilu,
Head Chef and owner,
Pilu at Freshwater, Sydney.

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ASK THE EXPERTS



ALISTAIR WISE, PÂTISSIER

Is 70 per cent cacao best for cooking?

The world of cocoa is as complex as that of coffee. For some reason, 70 per cent has become the catchcry, the pass mark by which chocolate dishes are judged. Well, sometimes rules should be broken. The best chocolate to cook with is not 70 per cent alone: it's difficult to use, and in a ganache it tends to split. Processing can make a huge difference to the final result, too. The percentage only gives a relative idea of the sweetness, not the flavour or quality of the beans. It's the norm to use

different chocolates for different recipes, be it a filling or a tempered shell. The reasons for using good-quality chocolate remain the same, however: good snap, shine and flavour are addictive. Couverture chocolate has a broad spectrum of flavours and percentages, and a lower percentage may have easier handling but still retain those big cocoa notes that we love. When I make a ganache or chocolate mousse, I use a mixture of 53, 64 and 70 per cent, as well as 35 per cent milk. For ice-cream, I do the same, only without the milk chocolate. Eat lots of percentages from different manufacturers to find what suits your taste. And avoid white if you can. It's not chocolate; it's cocoa butter-clad milk powder. If you have to, though, it's best roasted.



HALL WAYS
Ghostboy Cantina owner Toby Wilson at Dixon House food court in Sydney's Chinatown.

TREND

Court action

From Bourdain to Batali – chefs are called to the food court.

With a wave of new food halls slated to open here and abroad in the next few years, the spotlight (albeit a fluorescent one) is turning towards quick, communal and casual eats.

Is the food court the new food truck? Toby Wilson, former owner of Sydney's Wedge Espresso, thinks so. The chef opened Ghostboy Cantina in Sydney's Chinatown in February, serving a mix of Cantonese and Central American-inspired street food from a shop in Dixon House food court. "Food trucks can cost \$100,000 to set up, and for markets you need all the equipment and a kitchen to prep in," he says. "A spot within a food court is a pretty good entry into that world if you have the right idea." Wilson's plan is to have no ties to authenticity and focus on serving affordable and tasty food. Tacos are the staple: made with Peking-style pancakes in place of tortillas, and with fillings such as beef brisket with mushroom XO and sambal salsa roja, and Szechuan-spiced pork neck with peach.

Further afield, Anthony Bourdain's food hall is slated to open in 2017 or 2018 in New York, while Penn Plaza's new food hall in Manhattan, Pennsy, opened in January and includes counters from Mario Batali, butcher Pat LaFrieda and vegan food truck The Cinnamon Snail. "A lot of stuff happens in Sydney, but it's created by a bank or regulated by a council – it's not something naturally evolving," says Wilson. "Dixon House is the closest thing Sydney has to a hawker market." *Ghostboy Cantina, Dixon House, cnr Little Hay & Dixon sts, Sydney, NSW*

A STICKY SITUATION Too much chocolate? This luxe sea salted-caramel spread from Perth chocolatier Sue Lewis (\$14 for 180gm), is a hit on thick-cut toast or pancakes, in your next tart or straight from the jar. suelewischocolatier.com.au



TRAY CHIC

The Seasonal Circle marble egg tray and salt and pepper cellar (inset).

MEET YOUR MAKER

The Seasonal Circle

Form meets function in these marble wells built to stand the test of time in the kitchen.

After studying nutrition, Hannah Archibald went on to work as a private chef, and spent her days growing and preparing wild and native Australian food for clients such as activewear designer Lorna Jane Clarkson. Now she's a designer, but still lives and breathes the rhythm of the seasons from her home in Cabarita Beach in northern New South Wales. What originally began as "knocking up some simple labels for the garden", she says, has since turned into sandblasting and cutting marble French vanilla-hued egg trays and Calcutta-gold salt and pepper wells for her food concept and homewares line, The Seasonal Circle.

Why did you choose to work with marble specifically, Hannah?

My family has a stonemasonry business in Brisbane, now in its fifth generation. It was established in 1885, so you could say it's in my blood. I'm able to use the small pieces of marble that can't be used in their larger projects.

What do you love about the material?

The marble I use comes from all over the world. I like to look at the natural characteristics and features of the stone and add my small details by either sandblasting, chiselling or cutting. All the products I make are made to last and endure.

What kind of products can we expect to see next from The Seasonal Circle?

Seasonality influences so many aspects of our lives. I'm constantly inspired by seasonal food, what happens around the table and in the garden. I'm looking forward to introducing indoor planters at my next pop-up event in autumn.

From \$39, The Seasonal Circle, theseasonal.com



CALENDAR

CLASS ACTION

Pâtissière Lorraine

Godsmark hosts

a chocolate appreciation class, **Chocsessive**, on

14 and 15 March. The

evening is one of the

various "show and tell"

nights on the jam-packed

March into Merivale

program. Tickets are \$75.

marchintomerivale.com.au

UNDER THE STARS

The team behind Diner

en Blanc Sydney launch

A Moveable Feast on

12 March with a Riviera-

themed picnic on Bondi

Beach. Tickets are \$220,

including food and drinks.

amoveablefeastevents.com.au

DINNER DATES

As part of the **Melbourne**

Food and Wine Festival

(4-13 March) Epocha,

Mamasita, Baby, Le Bon

Ton and The European

will each have food stalls

at the **Gourmet Cinema**,

an outdoor movie theatre

at Caulfield Racecourse

2-6 March. Each night

one restaurant will curate

three dishes to match

with the evening's

film screening.

gourmetcinema.com.au;

melbournefoodandwine.com.au



SWEET AS Bibelot will gift-wrap as few as two chocolates (\$7.50) and their packaging is as sweet as the sugar hits within. bibelot.com.au

REWIND

IN **March**
1989...

WE BAKED

Angel food cake



WE CRUISED TO

The fjords of Norway



WE INDULGED IN

Macaron, jam and sherry
"snow mousse" ice-cream



THE PRODUCERS

Chocolat by Daniela

Collaboration and couverture are the magic ingredients in these rich truffles.

WHO In 2015, Daniela Mazzone switched her creative focus from writing to chocolate when she started Chocolat by Daniela from her home kitchen in Adelaide. The self-taught chocolatier cites trial and error as her main guide. “Although I had some mentoring from my wholesaler, who has years of experience, I had very little knowledge of couverture to begin with,” she says. “It’s a very precise art.”

WHAT Mazzone specialises in hand-rolled, ganache-centred truffles. The chocolates are made using premium couverture from Cacao Barry, and are flavoured with various liqueurs, rose petals, spiced nuts and dried fruit. When it comes to choosing her fillings, Mazzone likes to experiment with South Australian-produced ingredients, including gin from boutique distillery Kangaroo Island Spirits, craft beers from Big Shed Brewing Concern, and wines from McLaren Vale winery Primo Estate. “The seasonal fruits and botanicals usually come from surrounding gardens, including my nonna’s and neighbours,” she says.

HOW Chocolat by Daniela truffles are handcrafted, then packaged in assortments that change regularly. Most of the assortments feature Daniela’s two most popular flavours: Giandua ganache infused with coffee, Marsala and amaretto, and the “very dark, very edgy” Americano, which combines American ale, stout and salted-caramel ganache. Some collections come with a bottle of wine, too, with the truffle flavours created to match the drop.

WHY “The process is so expressive and romantic,” says Mazzone. “It’s not about a cookie-cutter mould, and the goal is always to make people feel something beyond the everyday experience of chocolate.”

WHERE Chocolat by Daniela truffles are available at chocolatbydaniela.com.au or phone 0402 366 470. LAKSHA PRASAD



ALL SORTS
Daniela Mazzone (left)
and her Bambino
assortment (below).



LIVING COLOUR

Alistair and Teena Wise’s young daughter, Matilda, told her parents that the chocolate at their Hobart pâtisserie wasn’t colourful enough. Fancy Freckles (\$5 to \$10) were the answer: 58 per cent couverture topped with crushed macarons. Genius. sweetenvy.com



HALF-BAKED Bouchon Bakery’s Double Chocolate Chunk Cookie Mix (\$30; makes 12) is made with rich Callebaut chocolate and a hint of molasses. When you can’t bring yourself to bake biscuits from scratch, these will be ready faster than you can say “Thomas Keller”. williams-sonoma.com.au



NATURAL HIGH Made from coffee, cocoa and cola nuts, Germany’s Scho-Ka-Kola chocolate launched in the ’30s as a performance-enhancing snack for athletes. The retro tins (\$9, each with 16 pieces) are now available at thirddrawerdown.com.

WHALE OF A TIME
Logan Campbell of
Jonah's Whale Beach.

ON THE PASS

Logan Campbell, Jonah's Whale Beach

How would you describe your style of cooking?

Mediterranean. That's what I grew up eating and it's what I feel comfortable with. Garlic and good olive oil are always the first things I reach for when I cook.

How does Australian oil stack up against Italian?

Olive oil is very delicate. The fresher, the better, which is why I'm a huge advocate of Australian oils. We get ours cold-pressed from McLaren Vale.

What can we expect on the menu this month?

This is the time of year when we like to get creative. We recently found a nearby supplier that does alpaca. I'm hoping to serve it with some Australian natives like lemon myrtle, pepperberries and paperbark. It's such a beautiful and flavoursome meat.

What's the Jonah's signature?

Our menu tends to lean towards seafood because of our location. One of my favourite things to work with is New Zealand whitebait, which is a delicacy from my home. Right now, we're serving it with squid-ink linguine, chilli and crushed tomatoes.

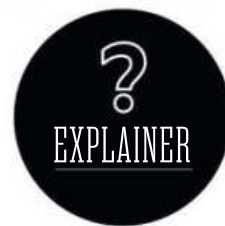
Do you have anything in the works for Easter?

People love chocolate so we're going to do a take on my childhood favourite – a Cherry Ripe. We'll do a coconut and cherry mousse on a milk-chocolate biscuit and then cover it in ganache, and serve it with a roasted coconut sorbet, some dark chocolate soil and popping candy.

Let's talk chocolate, Logan. Dark, milk or white?

I prefer cheese over chocolate, but if I had to choose, I love a simple piece of milk chocolate.

Jonah's, 69 Bynya Rd, Whale Beach, NSW,
(02) 9974 5599, jonahs.com.au EMMA HUTTON



MANTIS PRAWNS

Their various nicknames – prawn-killer, pissing shrimp, sea locust, thumb splitter among them – obviously weren't dreamed up with marketing in mind, but mantis prawns have their dedicated admirers. Chef Chase Kojima, of Sydney's Sokyo and Kiyomi on Queensland's Gold Coast, is a fan and snaps up any mantis prawns Sydney fish supplier Narito Ishii can get his hands on. "It's traditionally eaten as sushi – you get it live, boil it, peel it, and then roast the shells to make tsume (a sweet teriyaki-style sauce made from soy, mirin, sake and sugar)," says Kojima. Dan Hong (of Mr Wong and Ms G's) says mantis prawns are only occasionally available in Sydney, as a by-catch of eastern king prawns. "They're very perishable out of the water – only the big ones are worth eating because there's not much meat on them, just a thin strip," says Hong.

RICE RISING Saké, Sydney's post-Nobu powerhouse, is expanding, bringing its brand of modern Japanese dining to 121 Flinders Lane in Melbourne in April. Expect shochu lockers, live entertainment and more.

RAISING THE BAR

Neither bark, nor block, Koko Black Inclusions (\$16.50/150gm) invite Tassie honeycomb, cashew nut brittle and marshmallow into the zone. kokoblack.com



FINE LINE

Practical design details mark the Gourmet Traveller Signature Collection, handcrafted in Melbourne by Robert Gordon Australia. The cake stands and plates feature a slight lip, for instance, so if you have a syrup to drizzle over your cake, none of it goes to waste. Pieces start from \$30. domayneonline.com.au

GOURMET
TRAVELLER

HOT PLATES

*Our restaurant critics' picks
of the latest and best eats,
updated weekly on
our website:*

gourmettraveller.com.au

HONG KONG

Australian chef James Henry has swapped Paris's 11th arrondissement for Soho in Hong Kong. The former *Bones* and *Au Passage* chef is set to open **Belon** on Elgin Street this month, a Parisian bistro favouring French classics and an all-natural wine list.

BRISBANE

Paul McGivern, owner-chef at East Brisbane's **The Wolfe**, describes the aesthetic at his new digs as "Queensland luxe". The 55-seater replaces Egg Bistro and offers the likes of barbecued duck with figs and a cherry gastrique, and seared sea bream with pipis, zucchini flowers and saffron. The wine on offer suitably favours pinot noir and chardonnay.

NEW YORK

David Chang's **Momofuku Nishi** has opened in Manhattan's Chelsea with former Momofuku Ko chef Josh Pinsky taking the reins. Italian food is given an Asian spin with the likes of cacio e pepe, for instance, made with chickpeas in place of cheese. Playful menu footnotes reveal the inspiration behind each dish: the chow mein noodle Clams Grand Lisboa (pictured) is credited to one of Chang's favourite late-night haunts in Sydney, Golden Century.

MOMOFUKU NISHI



MELBOURNE

It's back to the Warren Zevon lyrics for the owners of Lee Ho Fook, who have christened their new café **Lawyers, Guns and Money**.

In the heart of the legal district, LGM banishes smashed avocado and scrambled eggs in favour of breakfasts of congee and steamed tofu. Head chef is Mike Li, sous at Lee Ho Fook since its 2013 opening. Plans are also afoot to turn the ground-floor private dining room at the new Lee Ho Fook on Duckboard Place into a bar.

SYDNEY

Plenty of buzz surrounds the autumn opening of **Fred's** in Paddington. The casual, neighbourhood-style restaurant is headed up by Chez Panisse alum Danielle Alvarez.

PINK MOON SALOON'S SUGAR PEA SOUTHSIDE.

SIGNATURE DRINK

Pink Moon Saloon's Sugar Pea Southside

A zesty autumnal sipper balancing light and bright with Southern charm.

Pink Moon Saloon's patron saint of cocktails, co-owner Marshall King, is going green — a vibrant, shamrock green — and there isn't a drop of Chartreuse in sight. "For our Sugar Pea Southside cocktail, we combine sweet but savoury sugar snap peas, aromatic gin and citrus — all of which are very good friends in the glass." King recommends Archie Rose Signature Dry Gin for notes of Dorrigo pepperleaf, lemon myrtle and river mint. *Pink Moon Saloon, 21 Leigh St, Adelaide, SA, pinkmoonsaloon.com.au* EMMA HUTTON

> Blend 2 cups of raw sugar snap peas with 1 cup each sugar and cold water until sugar dissolves. Pass the mixture through a fine strainer.

Combine 45ml pea syrup, 50ml dry gin and 20ml lemon juice in a shaker. Add ice to fill, shake, taste, then strain into a salt-rimmed coupe to serve.

RING MASTERING

Heather Delancey Hunwick gives Homer Simpson's obsession a run for its money in the latest Edible Series title, *Doughnut: A Global History* (Reaktion Books, hbk, \$24.99).



SÌ SIGNORE The 2016 Parabere Forum takes place in Bari, Italy, on 6-7 March and sees chefs, restaurateurs, activists and executives gather to discuss entrepreneurship and women in gastronomy. parabereforum.com

Eggcups

Get cracking this Easter with our pick of eggcups to bring your eggs out of their shells.

1 Donna Wilson “Beardy Man” eggcup, \$25, from Space Furniture. **2** Huon Pine eggcup, \$22, from Indeco. **3** Design Letters AJ eggcup, \$59.95 for a set of two, from Design Mode International. **4** Rice hen-shaped eggcup, \$29.95, from Outliving. **5** Dressed Marcel Wanders for Alessi white eggcup, \$47 with spoon, from Top3 by Design. **6** Art Deco silver eggcup, \$295, from Greene & Greene Antiques. **7** Marimekko “Oiva” eggcup, \$39 for a set of two, from The Bay Tree.

8 Coastal blue eggcup, \$13, from Le Creuset. **9** Lucie Kaas Bordfolk “Girl” eggcup, \$34.95, from PoppyShop. **10** Lucie Kaas Bordfolk suit “Boy” eggcup, \$34.95, from PoppyShop. **11** Rice heart-shaped eggcup, \$28.95, from Outliving. **12** Badger ceramic eggcup, \$25, from Third Drawer Down. **13** Cara wooden eggcup, \$20, from Mr Kitly. **14** Metal eggcup with saucer, \$24.50, from The Bay Tree. **15** Cashmere “Charming Atlantis” eggcup, \$5.95, from Maxwell & Williams. *Stockists p183.* ●



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EASTER CHOCOLATE BUYER'S GUIDE

We've done your Easter egg hunt for you. Not just eggs but bars, truffles and bunnies, too. And we've put it all in one basket – so hop online for our choc-a-block guide.

GOURMETTRAVELLER.COM.AU

GOURMET HOT PLATES

Our restaurant critics' picks of the latest and best eats, updated weekly on our website:

gourmettraveller.com.au



RECIPES TO MELT THE HEART

What's your all-time favourite chocolate recipe from the GT archives? Is it the nougat, salted peanut, caramel and milk chocolate tart? Our chocolate and almond millefeuille? Or perhaps you're all about the beetroot chocolate mud cakes? Dive into the top 30 most-clicked-on choc recipes of the decade on our website. Plus, for more melting moments, see our best-ever ways with white chocolate.



TAKE THE CAKES

Planning to wow your guests with a towering Black Forest cake or a classic gâteau Opéra? Look no further than our gourmet selection of more than a baker's dozen show-stopping chocolate cakes worthy of gracing any occasion.



Videos

Treat yourself to a behind-the-scenes sneak peek at Noma Australia (above), hear tunes from Gerald's Bar in San Sebastián, and watch as the folk at The Little Veggie Patch Co show you how to make egg-carton planters.

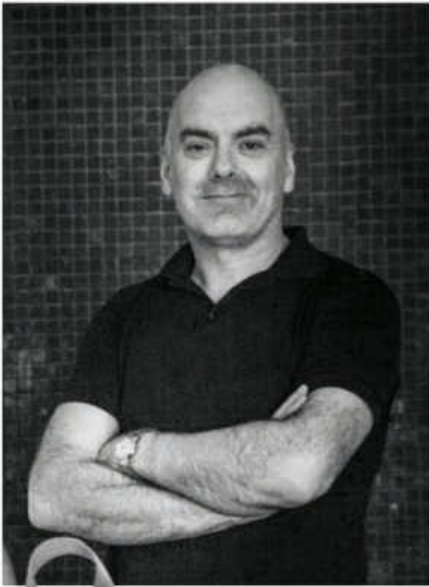


FEAST AT EASTER

Keen to celebrate by making a classic sfogliatella, tsoureki or pashka? Head to our website for recipes for all these Easter treats – and hot-cross buns, too.

CONNECT WITH GOURMET TRAVELLER

Get your daily fix of breaking news, web exclusives, our favourite recipes and more by following GT online.



Marque time

Join us to celebrate the release of chef Mark Best's new cookbook with a special dinner at his Sydney restaurant Marque.

There are many ways to get your daily dose of vegetables. Mark Best likes his in dessert. "It's a little different, but they can be so delicious and sweet," he says, ever the contrarian.

To celebrate the launch of his second cookbook, *Best Kitchen Basics*, we've teamed up with the Sydney chef to present a six-course reader dinner at Marque, featuring some of his favourite cook-at-home recipes taken from the new book, including a surprising vegetable number to finish.

"They're not high-end restaurant dishes," he says. "Good cooking is not about luxury ingredients. It's a response to what you have."

Best Kitchen Basics exalts simple ingredients with the twist of innovation we've come to expect from the rogue chef.

Fermented chickpea falafels and slow-cooked lamb shoulder with daikon in a soy, star anise and ginger-scented hotpot are just some of the dishes that will grace the table on the night.

The grand finale is a mini festival of desserts that includes dried chocolate mousse with grapefruit curd and sherbet. And then the vegetal show-stopper: a parsnip cornetto with candied pumpkin.

"We turn the insides of the parsnips into an ice-cream, so you end up with something like a parsnip waffle cone," says Best. "If you didn't know you were eating vegetables, you'd think nothing of it." Game on. Join us for dinner at 6.30pm on Monday 21 March at Marque, 4-5/355 Crown St, Surry Hills, NSW. The cost of \$165 per person includes six courses and a \$10 donation to the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation. To book, call (02) 9332 2225. For more on the OCRF, call 1300 OVARIAN or visit ocrf.com.au.

PERSONAL BEST

From left: Mark Best; Marque's dining room; dried chocolate mousse with frozen grapefruit curd and sherbet, from *Best Kitchen Basics*.

MARQUE

* Fermented hummus falafel

* Brandade

NV Louis Roederer Brut Premier, Montagne de Reims

* Brawn

2015 Braemore Sémillon, Hunter Valley, NSW

* Fish soup and rouille

2015 Eloquesta "A Boy with Fruit" Viognier Chardonnay, Mudgee, NSW

* Saltbush lamb and daikon hotpot with fermented shiitake and carrots

2014 Cullen Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot, Margaret River, WA

* Dried chocolate mousse with frozen grapefruit curd and sherbet

* Parsnip cornetto with candied pumpkin

2012 Laughing Jack "Lily's Cane Cut" Sémillon, Barossa Valley, SA



LE CREUSET

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MYER

Fare exchange

Recipes you've requested from Australia's leading restaurants.

SON IN LAW Crisp barramundi fillets with roasted chilli, mint and coriander

MOMOFUKU SEIOBO Jerk pork chop with lime

OSTERIA OGGI Celery heart, charred treviso and egg salad

SPICE TEMPLE Chinese pavlova

Momofuku Seiobo's jerk pork chop with lime (RECIPE P40)

REQUEST A RECIPE

To request a recipe, write to Fare Exchange, *Australian Gourmet Traveller*, GPO Box 4088, Sydney, NSW 2001, tag @gourmettraveller on Instagram, or email fareexchange@bauer-media.com.au. Please include the restaurant's name and address or business card, as well as your name and address.

Osteria Oggi's celery heart, charred treviso and egg salad (RECIPE P40)

CELERY Moller chair (used throughout) from Great Dane. Kate & Kate tablecloth (used throughout) from Luumo. Side plates from Citta Design. Linen napkin from Hale Mercantile Co. Salt dish from Bison Australia.

All other props stylist's own. **PORK** Grey plate from Papaya. Carafe from Country Road. Platter from Citta Design. Milk and Sugar concrete pendant light (used throughout). All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

BARRAMUNDI Platter from Citta Design. Tile (under tumbler) from Papaya. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

Son in Law's crisp barramundi fillets with roasted chilli, mint and coriander

"Son in Law's barramundi fillets have just the right amount of spice and zesty lime. I'd love to serve the dish at home. Can you help?"

Jennifer Collins, Richmond, Vic

Crisp barramundi fillets with roasted chilli, mint and coriander

Prep time 20 mins, cook 20 mins

Serves 4 as an entrée or 2 as a main course

- 1 tbsp uncooked glutinous white rice (see note)
- 1 kaffir lime leaf, chopped
- 1 tsp finely chopped lemongrass
- 1½ tbsp fish sauce
- 1½ tbsp lime juice
- 3 tsp tamarind water (see note)
- 1 tsp roasted ground dried chilli, or to taste
- 1½ tsp finely grated palm sugar, or to taste
- Sunflower oil, for deep-frying
- 800 gm whole barramundi, filleted with skin on
- Seasoned plain flour, for dusting
- 4 thin spring onions, thinly sliced
- 1 small Spanish onion, thinly sliced
- 1 cup each coriander and mint
- Crisp fried shallots, to serve

- 1 Dry-roast rice in a frying pan over medium heat, stirring frequently, until it starts to turn golden

(3-4 minutes). Add lime leaf and lemongrass, and toast until golden brown (3-4 minutes). Cool, grind with a mortar and pestle or in a spice grinder until medium-fine.

2 Combine fish sauce, lime juice, tamarind water, roasted chilli and palm sugar in a small bowl, mix well and reserve.

3 Heat oil in a large saucepan to 190C. Cut fish into about 12 pieces, season generously to taste, and coat in flour, shaking off excess. Deep-fry in 2 batches until deep golden brown and crisp (4-5 minutes). Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.

4 Toss barramundi, spring onion, Spanish onion, herbs, roasted rice and half the dressing in a mixing bowl, then transfer to a serving platter. Drizzle with remaining dressing and scatter with crisp shallots and serve.

Note Glutinous white rice, available from Asian food stores, will give the best result, but jasmine rice works at a pinch. To make tamarind water, combine 20gm (1 tbsp) tamarind pulp with ½ cup water in a small saucepan, bring to the boil and simmer just until soft (2-3 minutes). Strain, discarding seeds and fibre. Makes 2 tbsp, and will keep refrigerated for a week.

"Could you share the recipe for Momofuku Seiobo's jerk pork with lime? It's just the right dish to throw on the barbecue."

James McIntyre, Darlinghurst, NSW

Jerk pork chop with lime

Prep time 20 mins, cook 15 mins (plus resting)

Serves 4 (pictured p38)

- 4 pork cutlets, chine bone attached, rind removed (about 300gm each)
- 2 tsp grapeseed oil
- Lime cheeks and kaffir lime leaves, to serve
- Finely grated rind of 2 limes
- Warm roti, to serve (optional)
- Jerk spice mix**
- 35 gm brown sugar
- 1 spring onion, finely chopped
- 1 small garlic clove, finely chopped
- ½ small habanero chilli, finely chopped
- 3 tsp grapeseed oil
- 3 tsp ground allspice
- 2½ tsp tamari
- 2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1½ tsp lime juice
- ½ tsp finely chopped ginger
- ¼ tsp dried thyme
- Pinch each of freshly grated nutmeg and ground cinnamon

1 Preheat oven to 150C and a barbecue to low heat. Lightly oil the grill. For jerk spice mix, combine ingredients in a bowl with ½ tsp salt.

2 Season pork generously. Heat a large frying pan over high heat, add half the oil and brown half the pork well all over (1-2 minutes each side). Remove pork, wipe out pan and repeat with remaining oil and pork. Rub pork thoroughly with jerk spice mix and grill on barbecue until just cooked (3-5 minutes per side). If the jerk starts to burn before the pork is cooked, remove from the grill and finish cooking in the oven. Rest pork for 2 minutes, then arrange on a bed of kaffir lime leaves, sprinkle with finely grated lime rind, and serve with lime cheeks and warm roti.

Note Roti are available from select delicatessens and supermarkets, or see the GT website for a recipe. Warm them in the oven or on the barbecue.

"Andrew Davies' celery heart, treviso and egg salad at Osteria Oggi seems so simple, yet is packed with flavour. It'd be great if you could ask for the recipe."

Bryan James, Adelaide, SA

Celery heart, charred treviso, and egg salad

Prep time 20 mins, cook 6 mins

Serves 6 as an entrée (pictured p39)

- 6 eggs, at room temperature
- 1 head (about 180gm) treviso, cut into 6 wedges (see note)
- 10 pale inner celery stalks, thinly sliced
- 4 long green chillies, very thinly sliced
- 1 small white onion, thinly sliced
- 2 lemons, peeled, segmented

- 1 tsp caster sugar
- 1 cup each (loosely packed) flat-leaf parsley and coriander
- 1 cup pale celery leaves
- 65 gm (⅓ cup) salted capers, rinsed
- 60 ml (¼ cup) extra-virgin olive oil
- 80 gm aged parmesan, shaved

1 Heat a barbecue to medium-high heat. Cook eggs in a saucepan of simmering water until cooked to your liking (6 minutes for soft-boiled). Drain, refresh in cold water (1 minute), then peel.

2 Barbecue treviso wedges, turning occasionally, until lightly grilled (1-2 minutes each side).

3 Combine celery, chilli, onion, lemon segments, sugar, salt and pepper to taste in a bowl. Add herbs, celery leaves, capers, olive oil and treviso, and mix well. Arrange salad on a platter, tear eggs in half, add egg, scatter with parmesan, season to taste and serve.


Note Treviso is available from select Italian greengrocers such as Norton St Grocer; substitute regular radicchio. Osteria Oggi uses 18-month-old parmesan.

mixture, stir to dissolve and strain through a fine sieve into a bowl placed over ice. Stir occasionally until cool but not quite setting (5-7 minutes). Gradually fold into crème fraîche until smooth, then continue stirring over ice until starting to set and vanilla seeds stay suspended (5-7 minutes), being careful not to let it set completely. Remove bean and pour mixture into serving bowls or glasses and chill until set (30-40 minutes). Cover and refrigerate until required.

2 For passionfruit ice-cream, whisk passionfruit, sugar and yolks in a heatproof bowl over gently simmering water until thick and pale (5-7 minutes). Cool over a bowl of iced water (5-6 minutes). Whisk in cream and churn in an ice-cream machine, then freeze until firm (3-4 hours). Makes about 1 litre and will keep for 2 weeks.

3 For meringue roll, preheat oven to 150C. Mark a 20cm x 30cm rectangle on a sheet of baking paper. Lightly oil an oven tray, turn paper over and press onto tray. Whisk eggwhite in an electric

mixer to soft peaks (1-2 minutes), then gradually add sugar, whisking until firm peaks form (8-10 minutes). Fold in cornflour, vinegar and Sichuan pepper and spread mixture evenly inside rectangle template. Reduce oven to 120C and bake until meringue forms a crust (18-20 minutes). Cool for 20-30 minutes, then turn out onto a clean, dry tea towel, drizzle lightly with condensed milk and spread with a spatula. From a long side, use the tea towel to roll meringue into a cylinder. Cut into 8 pieces. Place each on a serving of panna cotta, top with passionfruit ice-cream, banana slices, passionfruit pulp and pashmak, and serve.

Note At Spice Temple the kitchen uses d'Isigny crème fraîche, available from select delicatessens. For passionfruit juice, process the pulp of about 22 passionfruit in a food processor, then push the pulp through a strainer to remove seeds, scraping to gather as much seedless pulp as possible. 

"I'm loving the Chinese pavlova dessert at Spice Temple in Melbourne. Could you please ask for the recipe? I'd love to replicate this at home."

Thao Le, Carnegie, Vic

Chinese pavlova

Prep 1 hr, cook 30 mins (plus cooling, freezing)

Serves 8

- 2 bananas, sliced
- Pulp from 2 passionfruit
- Vanilla pashmak (Persian fairy floss), to serve
- Panna cotta**
- 250 ml (1 cup) pouring cream
- 250 ml (1 cup) milk
- 1 vanilla bean, split, seeds scraped
- 85 gm caster sugar
- 2 titanium-strength gelatine leaves, softened in cold water for 5 minutes
- 220 gm crème fraîche (see note)
- Passionfruit ice-cream**
- 225 ml passionfruit juice (see note)
- 150 gm caster sugar
- 150 gm egg yolks (about 8)
- 450 ml pouring cream
- Meringue roll**
- 90 gm eggwhite (about 3)
- 180 gm caster sugar
- 1 tsp cornflour
- ¼ tsp white vinegar
- ¼ tsp Sichuan pepper, toasted, ground, sieved
- 1 tbspc condensed milk

1 For panna cotta, bring cream, milk, vanilla bean and seeds and half the sugar to the boil in a saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and simmer for 1 minute. Remove from heat and stir in remaining sugar to dissolve. Squeeze excess water from gelatine, add to cream



PAVLOVA
All props
stylist's own.

Spice Temple's
Chinese pavlova



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Quick meals

Make your midweek meals in next to no time with these fuss-free recipes from **Lisa Featherby**.

- 1 Peppers and eggs
- 2 Corn and avocado soup with goat's feta
- 3 Linguine with pesto
- 4 Chicken, radish and bean salad with tarragon dressing
- 5 Steak with zucchini and blue cheese salad
- 6 Chicken schnitzels with cabbage and grape salad
- 7 Spanish saffron rice with chorizo and prawns
- 8 Fish with tahini sauce, pomegranate and fennel
- 9 Figs, blackberry and mascarpone sablés

PEPPERS Bowl from Robert Gordon Australia. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

1 Peppers and eggs (RECIPE P44)

1 Peppers and eggs

For nice, neatly centred yolks, stir the eggs for a minute when you first add them to the water.

Serves 4 (pictured p43)

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 6 mixed capsicum (yellow, red or orange), seeds discarded, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, or to taste
- 1 tbsp white wine vinegar, or to taste
- 1 tbsp capers in salt, rinsed and drained
- 1 garlic clove, very thinly sliced on a mandolin
- 4 eggs, at room temperature
- 1 large handful of basil leaves, torn

Crusty bread and anchovy fillets, to serve

- 1** Heat a large wide saucepan or deep frying pan over high heat, add oil, then capsicum and sauté until capsicum is tender and turns golden brown (3-5 minutes). Remove pan from heat, cover with a lid and set aside for capsicum to steam and soften (5-10 minutes). Add extra-virgin olive oil, white wine vinegar, capers and garlic to capsicum, season to taste and toss to combine.
- 2** Meanwhile, bring a saucepan of water to a simmer over medium-high heat, add eggs and cook to your liking (7 minutes for medium yolks). Drain and refresh under cold water to stop the cooking, then set aside in cold water, and peel and halve when ready to serve.
- 3** To serve, divide capsicum mixture among plates, top each portion with a halved egg, drizzle with pan juices and scatter with basil. Serve with crusty bread and anchovies.

2 Corn and avocado soup with goat's feta

Serves 4

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 white onion, finely chopped
- 1 litre (4 cups) chicken stock
- 4 corn cobs, kernels removed
- 80 gm white quinoa, rinsed
- 1 ripe but firm avocado, diced
- 200 gm soft goat's feta, coarsely crumbled
- Torn coriander, ground chilli and lime cheeks, to serve

- 1** Heat oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat, add onion and cook until translucent and tender (3-5 minutes). Add chicken stock and bring to the simmer, then add corn and quinoa and simmer until tender (8-12 minutes). Season to taste, ladle into bowls and top with avocado and feta, scatter with coriander and chilli and serve with lime cheeks.

3 Linguine with pesto

Pesto is quick to make and the flavour and colour of bright fresh basil is amazing. It's best tossed with the pasta straight from the blender to retain its colour.

Serves 4-6

500 gm dried linguine

Pesto

- 5 cups (loosely packed) basil (about 2 bunches), plus extra to serve
- 250 ml (1 cup) olive oil
- 120 gm pine nuts
- 80 gm parmesan, finely grated, plus extra to serve
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- Juice of ½ lemon, or to taste

- 1** Cook pasta in a large saucepan of salted boiling water (7-9 minutes). Drain, reserving 125ml pasta water, and return both pasta and water to pan.
- 2** Meanwhile, for pesto, process ingredients except lemon juice in a blender until smooth, then season to taste with lemon juice, and salt and pepper. Add to pasta, toss to combine and serve with torn basil and extra parmesan.

4 Chicken, radish and bean salad with tarragon dressing

This simple salad is a great way to use up leftover roast or barbecued chicken.

Serves 4

- 400 gm green beans, trimmed
 - 4 radishes, thinly sliced
 - ¼ white onion, thinly sliced
 - 2 tbsp brown rice vinegar
 - 5 cups (loosely packed) mixed salad leaves such as frisée, watercress and torn radicchio
 - ½ charcoal chicken or leftover cold roast chicken, shredded
 - 40 gm tamari almonds or plain roasted, coarsely chopped
- Tarragon dressing**
- 160 ml buttermilk
 - 50 ml lemon juice

- 50 ml mild-flavoured extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 heaped tbsp finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp tarragon

- 1** Blanch beans until tender and bright green (2 minutes; see cook's notes p184). Drain and refresh in iced water, then drain well.
- 2** Combine radish, onion and vinegar in a bowl and set aside while you make the dressing.
- 3** For tarragon dressing, combine ingredients in a screw-top jar, season to taste and shake well.
- 4** Arrange leaves, chicken, beans, almonds and radish mixture on plates. Drizzle with dressing and serve.

5 Steak with zucchini and blue cheese salad

We've served the zucchini raw here, but grilling them with the steaks would also make for delicious results.

Serves 4

- 4 porterhouse steaks (about 200gm each), brought to room temperature
 - 2 tsp olive oil
 - Dijon mustard, to serve
- Zucchini and blue cheese salad**
- 60 ml (¼ cup) olive oil
 - Juice of 1 lemon
 - 50 gm Gorgonzola dolce, crumbled
 - 2 tbsp sour cream
 - ½ garlic clove, crushed
 - 2 baby gem lettuce, coarsely chopped
 - 3 zucchini, shaved diagonally on a mandolin
 - ½ white onion, thinly sliced
 - 4 large green olives, pitted and coarsely chopped

- 1** Heat a barbecue or char-grill pan over high heat until very hot. Brush steaks with oil, season to taste and grill, turning once, until browned and cooked to your liking (2 minutes each side for medium-rare). Set aside for 5 minutes to rest.
- 2** Meanwhile, for zucchini and blue cheese salad, whisk olive oil, lemon juice, Gorgonzola, sour cream and garlic in a bowl to combine. Add a little water to thin dressing to a pouring consistency if you like, then season to taste. Combine remaining ingredients in a bowl, drizzle with dressing, toss lightly and serve with steaks and Dijon mustard.>



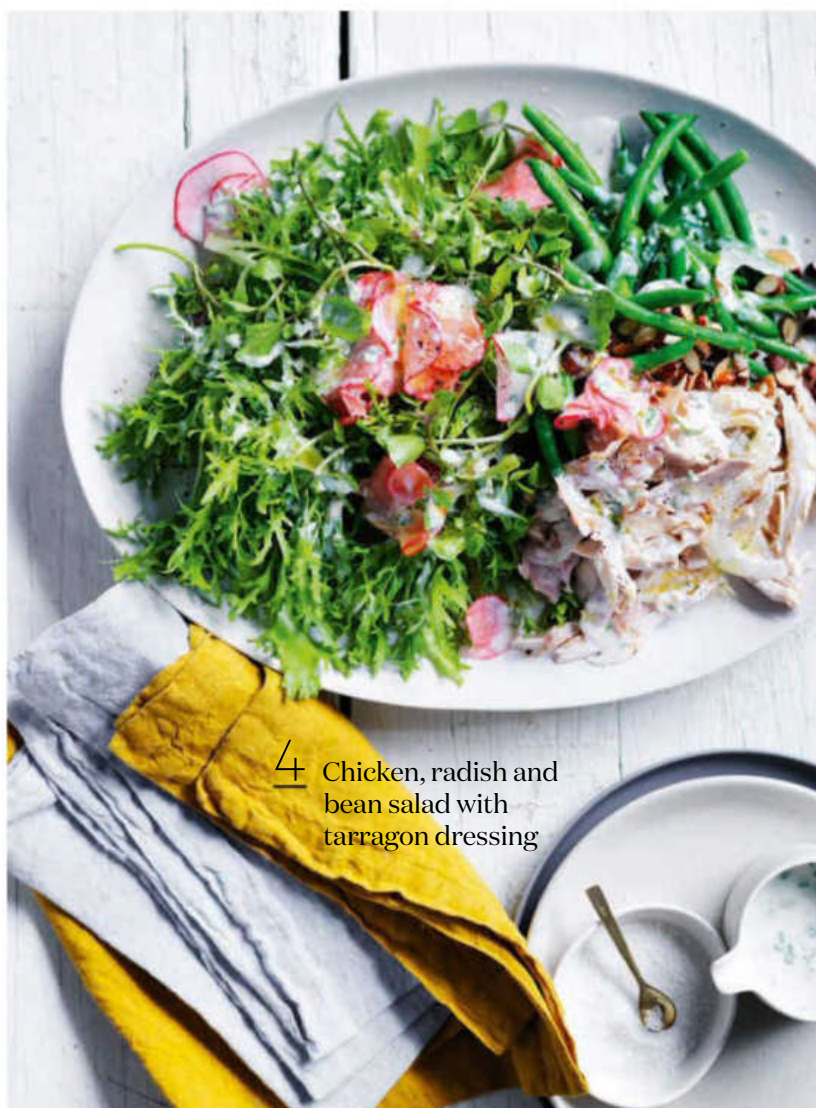
2 Corn and avocado soup with goat's feta



3 Linguine with pesto

LINGUINE Casserole from Williams-Sonoma. Bowl from The Fortynine Studio. Brass dish (with salt) from The DEA Store. Tablecloth from Hale

Mercantile Co. **SOUP** Bowls and plate from Citta Design. Grey timber tray from Mark Tuckey. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.



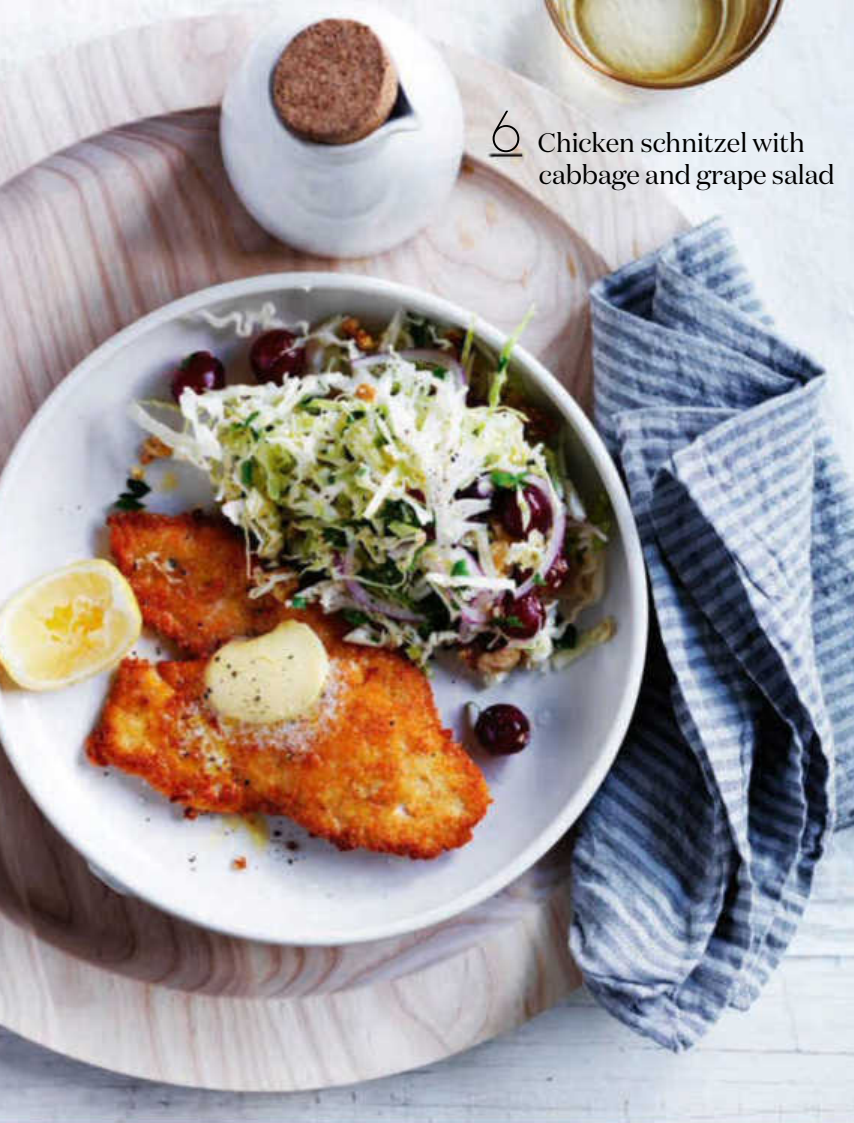
4 Chicken, radish and bean salad with tarragon dressing



5 Steak with zucchini and blue cheese salad

STEAK All props stylist's own. **CHICKEN** Oval platter from Citta Design. Linen napkins from Hale Mercantile Co. Salt dish, brass spoon and side plates from The DEA Store.

TEXT PAGE Salt cellar from Koskela. Stacked plates and bowls from Bison Australia. Clear glass tumbler from Citta Design. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.



6 Chicken schnitzel with cabbage and grape salad



7 Spanish saffron rice with chorizo and prawns



FISH Shallow bowls and tumbler from Citta Design. Salt cellar from Koskela. Grey timber tray from Mark Tuckey. **FIGS** Brass platter from Citta Design. Blue plate from

Bison Australia. Grey plate from The DEA Store. Canister from Freedom. Tablecloth from Hale Mercantile Co. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

8 Fish with tahini sauce, pomegranate and fennel



9 Figs, blackberry and mascarpone sablés

SAFFRON RICE Dish (with yoghurt) from Bison Australia. Glass from Country Road. Napkin from Citta Design. **SCHNITZEL** Timber platter from Mark Tuckey for Cotton On Home. Napkin from Hale Mercantile Co.

TEXT PAGE Tablecloth and napkin from Hale Mercantile Co. Grey bowl from The Fortynine Studio. Yellow bowl from Citta Design. Spoon from Lightly. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

6 Chicken schnitzels with cabbage and grape salad

Serves 4

- 200 gm soft fine wholemeal breadcrumbs
 - 100 gm parmesan, finely grated
 - Seasoned plain flour, for dusting
 - 3 eggs, lightly whisked
 - 2 chicken breast fillets (about 250 gm each), thinly sliced diagonally to make 8 thin escalopes
 - 60 ml (¼ cup) olive oil
 - 20 gm butter, plus extra, softened to serve
- Cabbage and grape salad**
- 500 gm cabbage, thinly sliced
 - 400 gm seedless grapes, halved
 - 100 gm toasted walnuts, coarsely chopped
 - ½ white onion, thinly sliced
 - 125 ml (½ cup) mild-flavoured olive oil
 - Juice of 1½ lemons, plus wedges to serve

- 1 Combine breadcrumbs and parmesan in a bowl and season to taste. Place flour and eggs in separate bowls and dust each escalope with flour, dip in egg then press into breadcrumbs to coat well and set aside on a tray.
- 2 For cabbage salad, combine ingredients in a bowl, season to taste and refrigerate until ready to serve.
- 3 Heat half the oil and butter in a large non-stick frying pan over medium-high heat and fry half the escalopes, turning once, until golden and just cooked through (1-2 minutes each side). Keep warm on a warm plate covered with foil or in a low (120C) oven and repeat with remaining oil, butter and escalopes.
- 4 Serve warm schnitzels with a little extra butter on top, black pepper, a squeeze of lemon and cabbage salad.

7 Spanish saffron rice with chorizo and prawns

There's paella and then there are other simple Spanish rice dishes. This is one of the latter – a combination of prawns and chorizo with Spanish rice. We haven't peeled the prawns, but if you prefer them peeled for less mess, cook them a minute less.

Serves 4

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 white onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- Large pinch of saffron threads
- 260 gm short-grain rice, such as Calasparra (see note)
- 180 gm fresh chorizo, sliced
- 12 prawns in the shell, legs removed
- 100 ml dry sherry or white wine
- 600 ml chicken stock
- Handful of coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley, to serve
- Aïoli and lemon wedges, to serve

- 1 Heat oil in a wide sauté pan or casserole over medium-high heat, add onion and sauté until tender (4-6 minutes). Add garlic and saffron, stir until fragrant (10 seconds), then add rice and stir to coat. Add chorizo and prawns, deglaze pan with

sherry, then add stock and bring to a simmer. Cover and simmer over low-medium heat until rice is tender (10-12 minutes). Remove lid, cover with a tea towel and leave to steam for 5 minutes. Scatter with parsley and serve with aïoli and lemon wedges.

Note Calasparra is a short-grain Spanish rice available from select delicatessens; if it's unavailable, substitute another short-grain rice and adjust the cooking time accordingly.

8 Fish with tahini sauce, pomegranate and fennel

This dish is inspired by a Claudia Roden recipe. We add a tahini sauce to the fish at the end of cooking just to coat it. It's light and delicious.

Serves 4

- 1 tbsp olive oil
 - 4 ocean trout fillets (about 150gm each), pin-boned
 - 50 gm unhulled tahini
 - Juice of 1 lemon
- Fennel and pomegranate salad**
- 2 fennel bulbs, shaved on a mandolin
 - 1 cup torn mint
 - ½ Spanish onion, thinly sliced into rings
 - Seeds from ½ pomegranate
 - Juice of ½ lemon
 - 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

- 1 Heat a large non-stick frying pan over medium-high heat until hot, add olive oil and ocean trout skin-side down and fry until skin is crisp (2-4 minutes). Turn and continue frying until ocean trout is cooked to your liking (3-4 minutes for medium-rare).
- 2 Meanwhile, combine tahini, lemon juice and 100ml boiling water in a bowl, season to taste and whisk until smooth, then, when the fish is nearly cooked, add to pan, bring to a simmer, then remove pan from heat, cover with a lid and keep warm.
- 3 For fennel and pomegranate salad, combine ingredients in a bowl, season to taste and toss to combine.
- 4 Remove ocean trout from pan and transfer to serving plates, spoon sauce over fish and serve with fennel salad.

9 Figs, blackberry and mascarpone sablés

We've baked shortcrust rounds and added seasonal fruit to turn them into a dessert. Use a mild-flavoured honey here that won't overpower the figs.

Makes 8

- 1 all-butter shortcrust pastry sheet (435gm) (see note)
- 250 gm mascarpone
- 250 gm crème fraîche
- 1 tbsp honey, plus extra for drizzling
- Few drops of orange-blossom water
- 8 figs, halved
- 125 gm blackberries (about 1 punnet)



To remove the seeds from a pomegranate, roll it first to loosen the seeds, then score the pomegranate around its equator and, holding it over a bowl, twist it apart, turn each half cut-side down and hit it with a wooden spoon until all the seeds fall out.

- 1 Preheat oven to 160C. Cut out eight 10cm-diameter rounds from pastry sheet with a cutter, place on a tray lined with baking paper and refrigerate for 5-10 minutes to rest, then bake, turning tray halfway through cooking, until evenly golden (12-14 minutes). Set aside to cool briefly on tray (5 minutes), then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely (5 minutes).
- 2 Whisk mascarpone, crème fraîche, honey and orange-blossom water in a bowl until smooth, then refrigerate until required.
- 3 To serve, arrange pastry rounds on plates, top with a spoonful of mascarpone mixture, figs, blackberries and drizzle with extra honey.

Note We use Carême shortcrust pastry. ●



The green machine

One of the most prevalent of the so-called superfoods these days, kale is easy to grow and resilient, writes **Mat Pember**, and keeps on keeping on.

Whether you love, hate or are ambivalent about kale seems to hinge on how long you've known it, and the relationship you've shared with it. If you have lived in the UK and tried allotment gardening, for example, you'd know that kale is about the only thing that survives during the winter. In this case it will rekindle memories of cold, wet winters infused with the smell of boiled kale. Most Australians, however, would have become familiar with it in the last decade and nowadays it has taken on superfood status.

In my youth, I knew kale's Italian cousin, the sexier-sounding cavolo nero. I love eating raw broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage – in fact, anything from the brassica family – so kale always has a place in my garden. I think of it fondly as the silverbeet of the brassicas, because where most winter crops fall over, kale stands tall.

To grow kale it's best to begin in the autumn months so March is ideal. While it will survive and even thrive in the toughest of winters, and summers for that matter, it prefers the cooler soil and even moisture of autumn.

When growing kale from seed, plant two seeds per individual seed cell and then water them in. The key to propagating seeds is providing constant moisture and even temperature, so placing your seed in a mini greenhouse is ideal. After seven to 10 days the seeds will germinate and if both pop up, cull the weaker.

Continue regular watering and a controlled environment and after two or three weeks the kale will be seedlings. At this point find it a permanent position in your garden.

Kale will outlast all other cool-season annuals, and continue to hang around throughout the following spring and summer. So choose a position that won't impose on next spring's plans; it will

tolerate a spot that's partly shaded but it prefers sun. Before planting, add compost and slow-release organic fertiliser to the soil. Being a leafy green, kale needs a lot of nitrogen for sustained growth. When planting in pots, use organic potting mix.

Kale plants are prone to heat stress early on, but once they're past the first month, they're here for the long run. To ensure success, water every day (in the morning) for the first two months. As the temperature cools down and rainfall increases, cut back to alternating days. And, as always, remember that potted plants will require more water.

At the same time, lock the moisture in with mulch. Pulverised pea straw, sugarcane or lucerne are best. Not only will the mulch provide its usual benefits (keeping the temperature even, reducing evaporation, weed control among them), but it will also deter the cabbage aphid.

To pick kale take the outer, mature leaves first, allowing the younger generation to come through. This style of harvesting allows the plant to keep producing. As picking continues, the stem of the kale continues to grow upwards, and it's not uncommon to see plants picked this way for a year or so, with bare stems up to a metre and at the top perfectly tasty leaves sprouting.

Kale's greater resistance comes from the cabbage white moth. Netting early – to prevent the moth from laying its larvae – diverts attention elsewhere, as will decoy moths (use sticks with white plastic flying at their ends to mimic them.)

Another problem on older plants is the build-up of the green-grey cabbage aphid on the inside of leaves. The best solution is to prune the infected areas, and use a soapy spray to clean off residue.

Kale can be kept in the ground until enough is enough. Whether that's after too many green shakes or too much boiled kale is up to you.

WHAT TO PLANT

TEMPERATE

BETROOT ●
BOK CHOY/PAK CHOI ●
BROAD BEANS ●
BROCCOLI ●
BRUSSELS SPROUTS ●
CABBAGE ●
CARROT ●
CAULIFLOWER ●
CELERY ●
CORIANDER ●
FENNEL ●
GARLIC (BULBS)
HERBS (ALL EXCEPT BASIL) ●
KALE ●
LETTUCE ●
PARSNIP ●
PEAS ●
RADISH ●
ROCKET ●
SILVERBEET ●
SPINACH ●
SPRING ONION ●
STRAWBERRY ●
SWEDE ●
TURNIP ●

KEY

● Seed ● Seedling



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TIP OF THE MONTH: EGG CARTON PLANTERS

Gardening is about versatility and resourcefulness. But mostly it's about being creative in making the most of your resources and your gardening circumstances. It's a fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants kind of pastime, and if you blink, you could miss out on the beauty of turning an old egg carton into a biodegradable propagation kit.

A GOOD EGG An egg carton is one of the most adaptable recycling products around. It makes a good container for storing paints, can be made into toys, and can be converted into a 12-cell seed station.

SOW THE SEEDS Each egg cell will hold an ample volume of soil to

happily germinate a seed and then see it through to early adolescence. When the seedling is mature enough to cope with the big wide world, it's transplant time. Simply break apart the now-decomposing cell, bury it, plant and all, then bid it farewell, for, being biodegradable, it will break down into the soil. ●



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A pair of aces

Wine takes centrestage at two new Melbourne bars but the finely tuned menus by no means play second fiddle, writes **Michael Harden**.

It was a game of wine-bar snap when Embla and Marion opened within months of each other. Both are headed by acclaimed restaurateurs: The Town Mouse's Christian McCabe and Dave Verheul at the former; Andrew McConnell at the latter. Both have wine lists that showcase small producers and minimal intervention; both have a French connection; both emphasise that they're bars first and foremost (Embla doesn't take bookings), though their short, sharp menus of wine-focused food are certainly a major part of the appeal.

Given the match-up, it's tempting to sift the tea leaves for signs of a new epoch in Melbourne dining. Established players taking it down a notch? A Parisian-influenced wine bar in every stable? Wine bars with food morphing into food bars with wine? But Embla and Marion are each so immediately familiar the game-changer argument runs out of puff early on.

What's happening here, then, is more a fine-tuning, an evolution even (if you want to get really portentous) of one of Melbourne's long-standing dining strengths: the flexible, well-designed, mid-priced diner. Think Bar Lourinhã, Izakaya Den, Kirk's Wine Bar, The Carlton Wine Room. Embla and Marion are not reinventing the wheel, but they are, by honing their focus, giving it a rather thrilling new spin.

You could argue that The Town Mouse, all bar-style seating and flexible, shareable menu, has a touch of the

wine bar about it, making Embla simply an offshoot. But where Verheul's Town Mouse dishes have a multi-ingredient, restaurant-like complexity to them, his food at Embla is simpler and more comforting, readier to cede the limelight to the wine.

This isn't to say there's not precision and ambition here. That much is immediately apparent in Verheul's sublime roast chicken. It's a halved, mostly boned (apart from the leg) and salted 10-week-old free-range organic bird from Milawa Poultry, which is cooked to order with rosemary and whole cloves of garlic in a cast-iron pan in the wood-fired oven. It comes with a deeply satisfying chicken sauce made from the bones and a simple gremolata and is as fine and juicy a bird as you would find in any restaurant in town. It's roast chicken to make you misty for times when eating chicken was exceptional, not expected.

This simple, finely balanced, ingredient-focused approach never wavers. It's there in plump Spanish anchovies paired with cultured butter, shallots and parsley on toasted house focaccia. It's there in steamed local mussels that are pickled in mussel juice mixed with sherry vinegar and then served with a punchy pale orange rouille flavoured with saffron, paprika, chilli and caramelised garlic. It's there in the surprising, scintillating mix of soft rags of stracciatella cheese mixed with chamomile-infused oil and fermented fennel, and with a sneakily boozy dried-peach rum>

DYNAMIC DUO
Christian McCabe (left)
and Dave Verheul of
Embla, and the
restaurant's roast
chicken.



FRENCH CONNECTION

Clockwise, from top: Embla's stracciatella with fermented fennel; manager Andrew Joy of Marion; Marion's mussels with 'nduja crumbs; heat in the Embla kitchen. Opposite: Marion's bill of fare and its spanner crab with Avrug.

baba served with a white chocolate Chantilly.

And it's certainly present in half-heads of broccoli, wood-roasted till the florets are crisp and charred, combined with a lemon-driven dressing flavoured with miso and sunflower seeds.

Having a wood-fired oven and grill as centrepieces is as much a statement of intent as an aesthetic at Embla. The oven, a hefty custom-made, rustic-looking iron thing, is the heart of the open kitchen. Watching the chefs – either from the stools that line the kitchen bar or the tables arrayed in front of it – slide small doors open to reveal glowing coals or to push about cast-iron pans in its depths adds an attractively primal note to the experience of eating here.

Add a room that's all dark colours – including a sleek black leather banquette at the back of the long narrow room and a grey stone-tiled floor – plus moulded timber joinery and an assortment of vintage

light shades that add some subtle, unironically comforting elements and you have an ideal, meticulously constructed rustic backdrop for Embla's other main event: the natural wine.

McCabe's wine list at The Town Mouse has always been liberally seasoned with the minimal-intervention stuff, but at Embla he goes all out. It's a logical choice, both given his own predilections and those of his other partner in Embla, Eric Narioo, a UK-based French wine merchant, bar owner and champion of the minimal-interventionist cause for decades.

The Embla list has a strong focus on small Australian producers – attractively effervescent Gentle Folk Pink Fizz from the Adelaide Hills, elegant Save Our Souls chardonnay from the Yarra Valley, supple, floral Sanskrit gamay from the Huon Valley – but there are also plenty of European labels. Many of them are from producers using age-old varieties and technique – Denis Pommier, Farnea, Philippe Tessier – which emphasise, as the wine list points out, that if natural wine is “trendy”, “it's a trend that's been around for about 6000 years so far”.

For the dubious, the Embla list contains plenty of stuff that's exciting to drink. Combined with McCabe and his staff's signature unpretentious, sermon-free approach and some beautifully crafted wine-friendly food, it allows Embla to straddle the traditional and the edgy in a thoroughly appealing way.

Marion's wine list, meanwhile, runs to around six pages, but has the considerable added heft of next-door neighbour (and sibling) Cutler & Co's substantial cellar on offer as part of the wine bar's package. The larger list can be a little daunting but service is one of Marion's notable strengths, and guidance is never far away when all those pages of labels begin to swim before your eyes.

Manager Andrew Joy leads the charge and sets the relaxed, confident tone of the place – a feeling that's maintained even when the two-room Gertrude Street shopfront is heaving. Joy is a good one to ask for wine advice (Cutler sommelier Liam O'Brian, working across the two venues, is no slouch either) and his catholic tastes mean he's as likely to suggest a glass of classic small producer Champagne (JL Vergnon) as he is to recommend a locally produced minimal-intervention number (LAS Vino Portuguese Pirate from Margaret River) or a locally brewed beer (Hawkers Pilsner from Reservoir).

It's a something-for-everybody approach, particularly if everybody is enthused about interesting wines made with passion, no matter where on the natural-classic-traditional spectrum they sit or from which part of the world they hail.

The depth of the wine list throws a broad challenge to the kitchen, particularly when the menu has been limited (literally, by a beautifully designed steel and timber pegboard with a finite amount of



space) to around 16 items, including dessert, cheese and oysters.

There's a lovely concision to the dishes at Marion that's borne by the luxury of truly great ingredients. A one- or two-bite snack of spanner crab meat mixed with crème fraîche, celery seed and lemon zest is topped with Avruga and sits on a thin, fried piece of rye cracker. Fresh sea urchin and pickled munties are cupped in a crisp squid-ink-flavoured tapioca cracker.

Steamed mussels, meanwhile, are turfed out of their shells, mixed with mint, parsley and strips of zucchini, dressed with a shiraz vinaigrette and then topped with parsley oil and fiery fried crumbs of 'nduja. House-made casarecce is tossed with chicory leaves and stems, sliced chilli and chilli oil and then topped with a deep-yellow tumble of grated cured egg yolk, while thinly shaved mortadella and ox tongue lie under a pale sprinkling of freshly grated horseradish. A tart filled with mascarpone and yoghurt and topped with halved, pitted fresh cherries comes with a cherry sorbet, made from blitzed whole cherries, including the stone, which adds a pleasant note of marzipan flavour to proceedings.

The simple-luxury approach of the menu is mirrored in the room. The concrete floor and



rough-hewn brick walls (now whitewashed), remnants of the space's former industrial life as a factory, are joined by leather, copper, marble and black powder-coated steel details. In one room there's a copper-coated modular bar, more like a rounded hub than a traditional linear counter, in the other an open kitchen with a terrazzo pass. Indoor plants soften the hard surfaces and excellent lighting – up- and back-lighting mostly – casts the crowd in a most flattering light indeed.

The similarities between Marion and Embla run the gamut from coincidental to ideological. But despite them being members of the same “wine bar with food” club, the depth of talent involved in each place means that the outcomes are unique. That they emerged about the same time may not indicate that Melbourne is about to witness a new wave, but with food, wine and service this good, we should all be wishing and hoping that it did. We are certainly the richer for both of them, regardless. ●

Embla

122 Russell St, Melbourne,
(03) 9654 5923,
embla.com.au

Licensed

Cards AE MC V EFT
Open Mon-Fri noon-1am,
Sat 4pm-1am

Prices Savoury courses
\$4-\$33, desserts \$10

Vegetarian Five dishes
Noise Lively

Wheelchair access Yes
Minus A name that
requires Google to make
any sense

Plus Wittily annotated,
sharply focused wine list

Marion

53 Gertrude St, Fitzroy,
(03) 9419 6262,
marionwine.com.au

Licensed

Cards AE MC V EFT
Open Tue-Fri 5pm-11pm,
Sat-Sun 8am-11pm

Prices Savoury courses
\$8-\$34, desserts \$14

Vegetarian Four dishes
Noise Boisterous

Wheelchair access Yes
Minus The kitchen is
ruthless in turning over
the menu; enjoy your
favourites while you can
Plus An instant classic that
appears to have been
around forever

AND ALSO

Panama crossing

Reasons for braving the stairs at **Panama Dining Room** increased when Luke Stepsys bought it and installed Ayhan Erkoc in the kitchen. Erkoc's modern Euro/Scandi-influenced menu includes prettily plated charred kangaroo with oyster leaf and rhubarb, and burrata with shellfish oil and peach, alongside slow-cooked lamb to share. Prices are fair and you can still have a beer and a game of pool.

Panama Dining Room, level 3, 231 Smith St, Fitzroy, (03) 9417 7663



French vibe

The latest collaboration between chef Ian Curley, Con Christopoulos and Josh Brisbane is **French Saloon**. Its zinc-topped bar imported from France and bentwood café chairs tap into the theme, as does Todd Moses's menu. Think smoked duck leg with cherries, beef carpaccio with anchovies and pickled green chillies and whole grilled flounder. The courtyard's the cutest in town. **French Saloon, level 1, 380-384 Little Bourke St, Melbourne, (03) 9600 1242**

Little sister

The folk behind Flinders' trattoria Cook & Norman have opened **Sorellina** next door, a café specialising in house-made bread and pastry. The daily changing selection of pastries is displayed at the front counter (try the bomboloni), while the menu has breakfast dishes of house-made fruit bread with whipped ricotta, cinnamon and local honey. There's panini for lunch and aperitivo-style snacks on Friday and Saturdays after 5.30pm. **Sorellina, shop 2, 52 Cook St, Flinders, (03) 5989 0119**

Dinner party menu

ENTRÉE

Roast cauliflower soup with chickpeas and chorizo

A dry rosé made from tempranillo or grenache

MAIN COURSE

Quince-glazed pork with celeriac mash

A young gamay or pinot noir

DESSERT

Chocolate-coconut meringue pie

A FORMAL affair

HOT SHOTS

Wolf Built-in Combi Steamer Oven (top) combines steam and convection cooking.

Wolf Built-in Pyrolytic Oven (below) with dual convection fans and 10 cooking modes.

Sub-Zero Integrated Refrigerator (at right) features an air-purification system based on NASA technology.

Opposite: Wolf Upright Oven features dual stacked gas-sealed burners, an infrared char-grill and teppan-yaki plate.

Sub-Zero and Wolf appliances are available at Winning Appliances.

Host an elegant and stress-free dinner party with dishes and tips by *Gourmet Traveller* and Winning Appliances.

A formal dinner party doesn't have to be daunting. The key is to think smart – smart in your choice of dishes and appliances. So bring on the advance party. Soup is ever an elegant entrée. And not only can it be made ahead, this soup benefits from time to develop, too. Roast cauliflower soup is made in half an hour – it just needs to be reheated and topped with garnish. Next up, quince-glazed pork, also quick to prepare, with a side of make-ahead celeriac mash. Finish with a flourish – chocolate-coconut meringue pie is a show-stopper, made in advance and chilled, with only the meringue left to top it off just before serving.

When it comes to appliances, you can't get smarter – or more stylish – than Sub-Zero and Wolf. Wolf ovens sense the size and shape of food and adjust to the appropriate cooking settings, then clean up after themselves, while Sub-Zero fridges adjust to your usage. Now, that's smart.



Dress your table to impress

A few simple touches lend a sense of occasion to your table. Candles and flowers are essential. One grand flower arrangement makes for awkward dining; instead, place a line of three smaller ones along the table (three is the magic, harmonious number when it comes to styling). And keep them uniform for a more elegant effect. No candlesticks? No problem. Groups of tealights in glasses bring a magical note to the table. When it comes to dinnerware, underplates lend a smart “dressed” look, especially under soup bowls. And tie everything together with a chic table runner (any nice fabric will work for this). Dinner looks better already.



Roast cauliflower soup with chickpeas and chorizo

Prep time 10 mins, cook 25 mins

Serves 4

- 1.25 kg cauliflower (about 1 large), cut into small florets
- 2 tbsp thyme leaves, plus extra to serve
- 170 ml extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 chorizo, thickly sliced
- 1 Spanish onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 750 ml (3 cups) chicken stock
- 375 ml (1½ cups) milk
- 400 gm canned chickpeas, drained
- 1½ tbsp sherry vinegar, or to taste
- Finely grated lemon rind, to serve

1 Preheat oven to 220C. Combine cauliflower, thyme and 100ml oil in a bowl,



season to taste, spread in an even layer on an oven tray and roast until golden and tender (15-20 minutes).

2 Meanwhile, scatter chorizo on a separate tray, drizzle with 20ml olive oil and roast until crisp (8-10 minutes). Keep warm.

3 Heat remaining olive oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat, add onion

and garlic, and sauté until soft (5-6 minutes). Add chicken stock, bring to the boil, then add milk and cauliflower, reserving a little for garnish, and process with a hand-held blender until smooth. Stir in chickpeas and sherry vinegar, heat through, then season and serve scattered with reserved roast cauliflower, chorizo, extra thyme and lemon rind.



The key to stress-free entertaining is to *think smart*, serving dishes that can be prepared ahead to give you more time to spend with your guests.

MORE RECIPES For the quince-glazed pork and chocolate-coconut meringue pie recipes, go to gourmettraveller.com.au/entertaining

FOR STORE LOCATIONS, VISIT WINNINGAPPLIANCES.COM.AU

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|---|-------------|--------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---|
| | | | Twin share pp from* | Twin share pp from* | Twin share pp from* | Twin share pp from* | On board spending money per person up to* Based on Mini-Suite |
| ARCADIA'S POLYNESIAN & ASIAN ADVENTURE | | | | | | | |
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| Sydney to Hong Kong | 19 Feb 2017 | 24 | \$4,419 | \$4,699 | \$5,459 | \$8,539 | £595 |
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| Southampton to Sydney | 9 Jan 2017 | 53 | \$8,489 | \$10,849 | \$14,919 | \$23,149 | £905 |
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| Genoa to Genoa | 29 Jun 2016 | 14 | \$2,379 | \$2,629 | \$3,499 | \$6,269 | £135 |
| Venice to Venice | 13 Apr 2016 | 14 | \$1,579 | \$1,749 | \$2,389 | \$4,459 | £135 |

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Noma Australis

René Redzepi of Copenhagen's Noma brings his pioneering philosophy to Australia, dreaming up a whole new native cuisine, writes **Pat Nourse**.

This year I chose to mark Australia Day not by jumping off the roof into the pool wearing a flag as a cape or drinking Passion Pop from the bottle on the beach topless while smoking a Winfield Blue. (Been there, done that.) Instead I decided to have lunch at a restaurant opened by a Danish-born chef of Albanian-Macedonian descent backed by an American hedge-funder on a site named for an Eora woman of the Cammeraygal clan.

Cammeraygal women were said to have tried to lure white men ashore in 1788 so the clan's warriors could attack them, but they were above all women of the sea. They worked their boats and fished with skills that dazzled the colonists, getting around Sydney's waterways in canoes, some of their craft tricked out, no less, with fires on deck.

That Danish chef, René Redzepi, has done his reading on Barangaroo, that Eora woman, on her husband, Bennelong, and on plenty more besides. He and his team have travelled the length and breadth of the country, diving in icy Tasmanian waters, trekking with indigenous elders in the steamy north, in search of tasty things to put on the plate in an ode to Australia. Redzepi says that this research and his restaurant's location, on the harbour at Barangaroo, have made Australia's waters his chief inspiration, and so Noma Australia, which is a pop-up iteration of the Danish restaurant that runs till the first week of April, is in large part concerned with seafood. It's a world

away from Copenhagen, but also a world away from what anyone is doing here. (Is it a coincidence that Jock Zonfrillo and Ben Shewry, the chefs of Orana in Adelaide and Attica in Melbourne, the two most adept explorers of indigenous ingredients, are also outsiders? Does it always take the fresh eyes of Scots, Kiwis and Danes to show us what's right here in front of us?)

Noma, frequently termed the world's best restaurant, is unquestionably one of the culinary world's great game-changers of the last decade. Redzepi's decision to focus on Nordic produce made its name. In coming to Sydney, he hasn't simply recast the hits from the menu back in Denmark in antipodean drag, but has instead dug deep into the ingredients and culture of Australia in an attempt to come up with something new. He has succeeded.

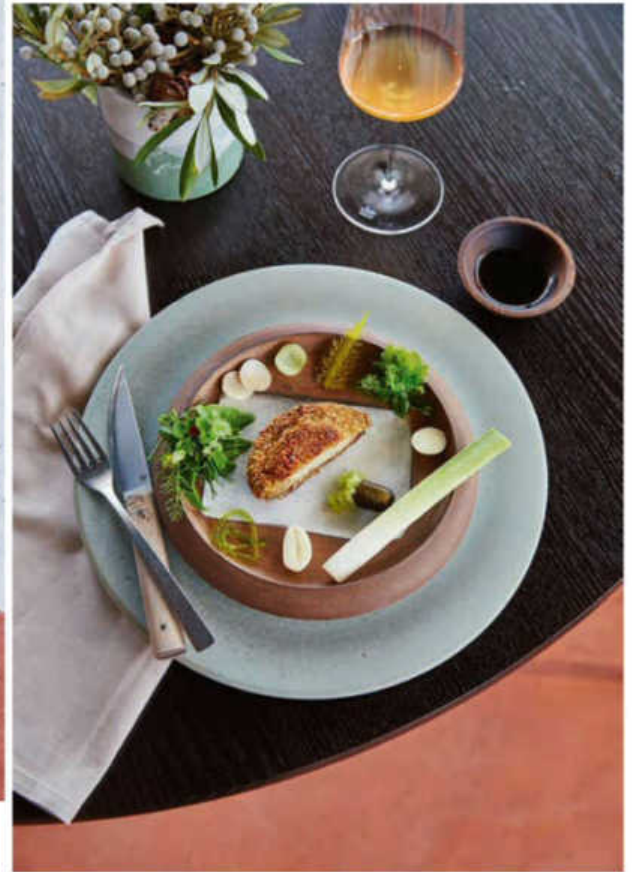
One of the joys of dining at Noma in Copenhagen is coming to grips with an entirely new vocabulary of ingredients and flavours – a new lexicon of deliciousness. To be presented with that experience in the country of your birth, though, is something else again.

Redzepi says he has never tasted wildness like he has tasted it here, and there's plenty on the plate that's straight out of the bush. Then sometimes it's the familiar made unfamiliar. You've eaten crab and you've eaten macadamias. But to taste them as crisp slivers of the unripe nuts in a chilled spanner crab consommé with a suggestion of rose oil is to taste them anew. And that's even before you get to a plate of richly>



GREAT DANE

Chef René Redzepi and the shellfish with crocodile fat he serves at Noma Australia.



SCANDI CHIC

From top: Foolscape Studio's design pays homage to the Australian landscape with wallaby furs strewn over chairs and potted grasses; abalone and wild condiments. Opposite, from top right: Noma Australia's take on the lamington; (from left) James Spreadbury, René Redzepi and Katherine Bont.

savoury-sweet Albany snow crab meat with egg yolk cured in – wait for it – fermented kangaroo. Marron appears grilled with magpie goose in a taco (they call it a dumpling) made of crisp milk skin, rich and remarkable. Presenting the whole thing in a little net of rushes, too, nods to indigenous weaving traditions without tipping over into what Paul Keating might have termed Aboriginal kitsch.

The shellfish platter is similarly thoughtful, the shells set on a bed of rocks, acknowledging a tradition enjoyed on the banks of the harbour for thousands of years: a pipi, a mussel, a strawberry clam, a flame cockle, an oyster – some cooked just enough to be opened, all chilled and pristine. They're each topped with a pane of crisp deliciousness the kitchen fashions from taking the skin that forms on simmering chicken stock, then drying it out and lacquering it with crocodile fat. You don't necessarily come away from this dish with a nuanced grasp of the flavour of crocodile, but you're certainly reeling from the brilliant contrast of the cool, plump shellfish and the crunch and richness of the fat.

Blacklip abalone, meanwhile, has never been so moreish than when it's breaded and fried and served, half of one per diner, as a tender, buttery schnitzel (albeit with a radical cast of supporting green and crunchy players dotted around the plate, including bunya nuts, finger lime, sea grape and mat rush).

Desserts are no less impressive, whether it's the light and airy lamington conjured from aerated rum cake topped not with coconut but shavings of dried milk, on a native tamarind sauce that sparkles with acidity, or the house take on a Gaytime, the Baytime – more of a Magnum – a confection of frozen green

peanut milk and caramel on a twig of lemon myrtle, enrobed not in chocolate but chocolatey freekeh.

The design of the room, by Melbourne's Foolscape Studio, walks the line between pop-up airiness and Scandic cool. It might be wrong to call it beautiful, but the Hans Wegner chairs (some of them draped with wallaby furs) offer comfort, and the acoustics are fair. It's a pop-up, but doesn't feel particularly impermanent. The kitchen is nearly the same size as the dining room, and is crammed with a United Nations of young cooks giving it their all. The palette of purple, ochre and dun is a paean to the salt lakes and deserts of Australia, while materials with a charred finish on the ceiling reference fire. Flashes of sunlight on Cockle Bay beyond the pale olive curtains add life, as does an abundance of potted grass plants. The bespoke cutlery, plates and bowls, meanwhile, many of them fashioned from timber and clay, plus the Zalto crystal stemware, bring a welcome touch of tactile luxury. A handful of tables out on the patio make a fine place to linger over a coffee or a beer after you're done eating.

Every restaurant in town ought to study the service. Led by two Australians, restaurant manager James Spreadbury and team leader Katherine Bont, who have been welcoming faces in Copenhagen for many years, it's informed but relaxed, carefully paced without being stagy, and unerringly engaged. The chefs bring out many of the dishes, explaining without lecturing, and the whole thing ticks over smoothly and surprisingly quickly – you can eat the entire menu in just over two hours, but never feel rushed. In other words, it's a blueprint for how things ought to be in 2016.

And that goes double for the ceaselessly inventive but never forced drink pairings. Every glass, nearly all of them Australian, and every one from a small, interesting producer, brings something to the table, and to each dish. Sommelier Mads Kleppe and his team have done no less research than the guys in the kitchen, unearthing fascinating finds, whether it's the cider-ale Snakebite combination made for the restaurant by the Two Metre Tall brewery in Tasmania that sings with the crab consommé or the Domaine Lucci chardonnay from Adelaide Hills wild-man of wine Anton van Kloppe that complements a "pie" of dried-scallop fudge in a short seaweed pastry with lantana flowers.

And while Kleppe is bold in his choices – lots of this stuff is cloudy, some of it carries the tannic richness born of skin contact in the winemaking, and there's not a single glass of red wine in the pairing – there's flexibility here, too. As much consideration is given to the beer pairings and the selection of juices (riberry! bergamot kombucha!) and coffee as the wine.

Given that tickets for the entire 10-week run of the restaurant sold out within 10 minutes of going on sale late last year, the question of price may be academic. It's safe to say that \$485 a head for food, plus another \$215 per person for the matched drinks is a lot of money. And the value? You can certainly see the labour and the goods on every plate. More to the point, this is truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

"I have absolutely no idea where I'll be in 10 years," Redzepi said in an interview with *Gourmet Traveller* in 2010. "I know one thing, though. I'd like to give my family, my child I have now and perhaps future children, the opportunity of living somewhere else in the world. I'd also like to give myself the learning experience of starting again from scratch and getting to know a new place, new people and new ingredients."

"Imagine" reads a public artwork near the restaurant on the end of the wharf. Redzepi has certainly done that. He and his team have dreamed up a native Australian cuisine that is bolder, more creative and – most essentially – tastier than anything anyone has served in a restaurant in Australia before. Beg, borrow or steal: this is one party you'll want to join. ●

MORE ONLINE

Missed out on a table at Noma Australia? Despair not. We'll get you in online for a behind-the-scenes tour: gourmettraveller.com.au



Noma Australia

23 Barangaroo Rd,
Sydney, NSW,
(02) 9188 4100
noma.dk

Cards AE MC V EFT

Open Tue-Sat lunch from noon, dinner from 7pm

Prices Tasting menu \$485

Vegetarian On request

Noise Well-handled

Wheelchair access Yes

Minus \$9 for coffee on top of the motza you're paying for the drinks pairing

Plus Australia like you've never tasted it before

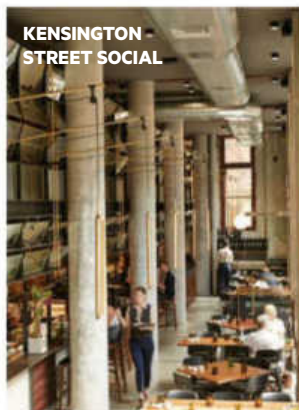
AND ALSO

Rise and shine

Opened by respected Thai providore Fiat Malaniyom, **Sunrise**

Asian Produce is part-grocery and part-eatery. And just as the shelves and fridges hold the likes of fresh coconut cream and pickled white turmeric alongside confit duck and Valrhona, the menu mixes West with East, offering Iggy's toast at breakfast, and coconut and banana blossom salad for lunch. **Sunrise Asian Produce**, shop 1/19-23 Elizabeth Bay Rd, Elizabeth Bay, (02) 9332 2844

KENSINGTON STREET SOCIAL



Social nobility

The last piece of the food-and-drink puzzle has fallen into place at The Old Clare hotel in Chippendale with the opening of **Kensington Street Social**, from UK chef Jason Atherton. Modelled on London's Pollen Street Social, it marries a modern international menu with a smart local-leaning list and a likeable have-it-your-way flexible approach to dining at breakfast, lunch and dinner. **Kensington Street Social**, 3 Kensington St, Chippendale, (02) 8277 8533

Pho sure

"Hey, Mum!" There are worse names for restaurants, certainly. At any rate, Johnny Nguyen has found new friends fast opening a Pitt Street outpost of his Strathfield Vietnamese eatery, **Me Oi**. Good pho remains a relative rarity in the CBD, so beef noodle soup-fanciers will find much to like here, along with all the core southern Vietnamese classics, from vermicelli salads, pork chop and tomato rice to egg noodles in broth with crisp-skinned chicken. **Me Oi**, 378 Pitt St, Sydney, (02) 8021 8600



BACK TO THE FUTURE
Stuart Knox of Sydney's
Fix St James.

Savvy tactics

A radical return to old winemaking methods is rehabilitating sauvignon blanc, writes **Max Allen**.

“I have skin-contact sauvignon blancs in the ‘amber’ section and low- or no-sulphur sauvignons in the ‘weird’ section.”

Sauvignon blanc has an image problem in fine-wine circles. It's the most popular commercial white wine in Australia. We guzzle an ocean of it every year, mostly in the form of cheap supermarket bottles from Marlborough in New Zealand. But its ubiquity is its undoing: familiarity, for some, has bred contempt. Snooty wine lovers and sommeliers dismiss the grape's fruity charms, claiming the wines it produces are boring. And as a result you can struggle to find sauvignons in some of our top restaurants. Unless, that is, the wines have been made using unconventional techniques.

The modern mainstream sav blanc – clear, crisp, fruity – relies on safe handling in the winery: clear juice, cultured yeasts, cold fermentation in stainless steel, early bottling, sulphur dioxide preservative additions.

But a growing number of adventurous sauvignon winemakers are doing the opposite: wild fermenting cloudy juice, on skins, in barrel or clay amphorae, ageing before bottling, with little or no sulphur. And the resulting wines are reigniting a passion for it.

“I have quite a few sav blancs on the wine list now, but it's not always obvious that they're sav blancs,” says Stuart Knox, owner of Sydney wine bar Fix St James. “I have a sauvignon blanc section for familiar wines, from Marlborough to Sancerre, but I also have skin-contact sauvignons in the ‘amber’ section, and low- or no-sulphur sauvignons in the ‘weird’ section.”

Knox says savvy is a great grape for back-to-the-future techniques because, regardless of how it's made, it retains its distinctive varietal character. “For people who are new to natural or skin-contact wines,” he says, “that unmistakable sauvignon flavour is something familiar they can hang on to.”

Barrel-fermenting (and ageing) sauvignon is nothing new, of course. Most top French producers from the Loire Valley such as Didier Dagueneau in Pouilly Fumé and Alphonse Mellot in Sancerre do it; oak-aged sauvignons have been sold as “fumé blanc” since the 1970s, and a large number of New Zealand producers have adopted the technique for their reserve wines since Cloudy Bay released its barrel-fermented, lees-aged sauvignon, Te Koko, a decade or so ago.

Indeed, if you are bored by innocuous Marlborough savvy, track down a bottle of Greywacke Wild Sauvignon, or Churton Best End, or Hans Herzog Sur Lie, or Dog Point Section 94. These are complex, multilayered expressions of grape and region.

The trend towards natural winemaking and skin-contact sauvignon, on the other hand, is revolutionary in that it's a radical return to old methods. Leading natural Sancerre producer Sébastien Riffault, for example, claims his low-or-no sulphur, oxidative, savoury wines recall the true flavour of Sancerre back in the early 20th century.

One of the first Australian winemakers to try the radical approach of fermenting sav blanc on skins – like a red wine – was Barossa-based Tom Shobbrook. In 2010, Shobbrook picked some savvy in the Adelaide Hills and wild-fermented the juice on skins for six weeks. The resulting cloudy, yellow, intensely flavoured wine, called Giallo, was a revelation, and inspired others to explore skin-contact white winemaking.

“That first wine came out of a challenge between (winemaker) Anton van Kloppe and I to see who could make the most interesting sauvignon blanc,” says Shobbrook. “We both picked fruit from the same vineyard on the same day. He made a clean, barrel-fermented wine but I started playing with skins to see how far you can go. Luckily it worked, so we kept doing it. And now we're seeing other interesting skin-contact white wines around.”

One winemaker inspired by the trend is Brad Wehr, producer of Wine by Brad, Amato Vino and Mantra in Margaret River. In 2015 Wehr made his first skin-contact savvy, a refreshing dry white called Skinnydip.

“Skinnydip came about when I didn't have room for a batch of sav blanc grapes in the winery during a hectic vintage,” says Wehr. “I had some clay amphorae so I chucked the grapes in to see what would happen. I liked it so much I'm going to make more this year.”

Echoing Knox, Wehr says that despite the funk of wild ferment, the savoury grip of skin contact, and the cloudiness of bottling without filtering, he likes that Skinnydip tastes unmistakably of Margaret River savvy.

“I like sauvignon blanc as a variety,” he says. “I like to drink it and I'm having fun doing things with it.”

TOP DROPS OF THE MONTH



FINE FIANO

2015 Jericho Fiano, Adelaide Hill, SA, \$25
I'm very impressed by the latest releases from this new label, established just a few years ago by the experienced Jericho wine family. As well as this lovely perfumed, textural white, look out for a juicy but savoury tempranillo.
jerichowines.com.au



YARRA "CLARET"

2014 Tokar Estate Carafe and Tumbler, Yarra Valley, Vic, \$25
Follow the label's advice. Invite some friends around, pour this medium-weight-but-firm blend of shiraz, tempranillo and pinot noir into a carafe, and take it and some tumblers (and a pizza or two) out to the garden or deck, and just enjoy it.
tokarestate.com.au

JUST ADD SODA

Red Økar, SA, \$39
A fabulous new "amaro" made in the Adelaide Hills by the crew behind Unico Zelo wines, using indigenous ingredients such as ribberries, and bitter botanicals such as gentian root. Use as you would Campari, with soda, or in a Negroni.
applewooddistillery.com.au



SKIN TO SKIN

2015 Libiamo Skin Contact Gewürztraminer, Gisborne, \$40
The wonderful thing about this wine is that, despite spending weeks and weeks macerating on skins, it's not over-extracted or heavy: the essential luscious, spicy, lively qualities of the gewürztraminer grape still shine through beautifully.
worldwineestates.com.au

A LITTLE TART

2015 Mount Avoca Limited Release Pinot Grigio, Pyrenees, Vic, \$33
Most wine made from pinot grigio is white, but the grape is in fact a dusky colour, and if you ferment the juice and skins together, you can end up with a bronze-hued, deliciously spicy, cranberry-crunchy textural wine like this one.
mountavoca.com



SUPERB SYRAH

2013 Saep Sapere Shiraz, Adelaide Hills, SA, \$40
Grapes from a 25-year-old vineyard at the southern end of the Adelaide Hills, made by Abel Gibson of Ruggabellus in the Barossa: an exquisite amalgam of succulent black fruit, intense peppery spice and fine, elegant but grippy tannin.
saepwine.com.au

6

THRILLING RIESLING

2015 Spinifex Riesling, Eden Valley, SA, \$30
There are lots of very good rieslings from the 2015 South Australian vintage to choose from, but one of the finest comes from a producer best known for rosé and red: this is simply thrilling wine, all kaffir lime and mineral salt refreshment.
spinifexwines.com.au



SHEER REFRESHMENT

2015 Wilson Vineyard Watervale Riesling, Clare Valley, SA, \$19
When it's good, Clare riesling has this moreish quality to it: a combination of sweet fruity-juiciness, wake-up acidity and dry, slatey aftertaste that makes you want to keep drinking. This great-value young riesling is a good example.
wilsonvineyard.com.au

LITTLE SWEETIE

2015 Paolo Saracco Moscato d'Asti, Italy, 357ml, \$22
Australia produces good moscato, but sometimes it's nice to go back and check out the original – especially if it's from a top producer and comes in a handy screwcap half-bottle: pristine, joyous grapy fruit and gentle sherbettey fizz.
mondoimports.com.au



BURIED TREASURE

Belgrove Apple Hatchet, Tas, \$72
Distiller Peter Bignell follows the sustainability mantra of "reduce, re-use, recycle": this rich, complex, tasty apple brandy is distilled from Tasmanian cider that local producers feel doesn't fit with their house style. Their loss, our gain.
belgrovedistillery.com.au



Q&A

MADS KLEPPE



WINE INSIDER: MADS KLEPPE, NOMA AUSTRALIA

What are you drinking? Yetti and the Kokonut 2015 sercial. It's full of rich, exotic fruit but still fresh and astringent. **Surprising Aussie producers?** Monique Millton and Tim Webber of Manon are picking fruit from abandoned vineyards. **Most challenging match?** The bowl of fruit. There are so many explosions in your mouth, I didn't want to mess with it. **Sydney bars?** Love, Tilly Devine, 10 William Street and Mary's. **Can't wait to return to?** Two Metre Tall brewery in Tasmania, to spend hours "nerding" fermentation with Ashley Huntington. **Top pairing in Sydney?** A Melbourne Bitter and a pie at the Unicorn. *Noma Australia, shop 10, 23 Barangaroo Ave, Sydney, NSW, (02) 9188 4100, noma.dk/Australia* MAGGIE SCARDIFIELD



Civic virtue

Beyond the city limits lies not just the absence of urban sprawl, writes **AA Gill**, but rather a lack of urbanity.

I don't like the country. I don't mean I don't like my country or your country, though I wouldn't say my friendship with either is unquestioning. It's the countryside I can do without. Why do we call it countryside? Is it because it gawks like a lumpy hitchhiker beside the road, the road that goes from one city to another? The space in between cities beside the motorway where the urban loses the will to live and just dumps its rubbish. That's the countryside.

We generally see the rural from behind speeding windows or from 30,000 feet. We regard it with mixed emotions: distaste and gratitude, mostly. Is country just beside the point? The point being where the point has always been: built in concrete and glass and air-conditioning. When someone says briskly, "Let's get to the point," they mean

something in a city. No one says, "Let's get to the point," when they're halfway up a muddy, wriggly, panting track on a hill to get a view of other hills. That's not a point. That's the opposite of a point. That's a lumpy, soft pointlessness.

Or does countryside imply that you're picking a side? Whose side is it on? Do you have to take sides with the country? I think you probably do. Certainly in Britain you do. There are country people and there are ordinary people. Country people are acolytes of hedges and walls that have forgotten what they're doing or what they're supposed to be dividing. And pebbles. They say things like, "It's a privilege just to live here." Or maybe, "Just to wake up here." And they'll gesture vaguely to some drooping fungoid bit of smelly, vegetative view. "Who needs art,"

they'll add, "when you can look out of the window at that?"

The countrysiders profess to pity ordinary people in the city. "All that rushing about. No time to stand and wonder. No manners. No community. You all make up for the absence of true nature by wearing headphones, eating foreign food and drilling holes in the cubicles of public lavatories."

The fact that the word civic and civilisation share a common root couldn't be stressed hard enough. It brooks little argument. The march of our species goes one way. From the bare unadorned savannah to New York, Bombay, Sydney, London, Dubai. Possibly not Dubai. But cities are where we're supposed to be. They are our natural habitat. The home from home.

And some time, a couple of years back, for the first time in over 200,000 years, most of us, the majority of our species, woke up in a city. That was a milestone that went mostly unheralded, uncommented. There weren't any fireworks. But those left behind in the dust and the darkness with no one to talk to but their brassicas are the rump, the residual leftover slowcoaches. The proof of something you and I have all noticed. Rural folk are less – how can I put this? – less vital, more ruminative, more vegetative, less sympathetically pyrotechnic than their city cousins.

We are becoming two species. We still look the same – or much the same – on the outside, but inside we're different. The world over, those who choose to remain in the green past lack imagination, inspiration, ambition, skill, looks or conversation.

Every year the brightest and fairest and most ambitious kids from every rural school go to a city only to return for Christmas and to introduce their fiancés, and then for their parents' funerals. There has been extensive research – almost all of it done by me – about what happens to humans who revert, go back to the country. The "porpoise people", as I like to call them. Ones who once stood on dry land but decided to turn back to the depths.



The first thing that happens to people who re-migrate to the ancestral badlands is that they let go. They let go of everything. Not just themselves, not just their waists and their hair, and doing up their flies. But they let go of culture, current events, politics. Rural politics is always based on the belief that your grandparents were all cleverer than Einstein.

Defying belief is what the countryside is all about. For instance, they truly believe that time actually slows down when you leave a metropolis. Country people will say this with conviction; they say it very slowly. The ability to believe things that are palpably nonsense is a constant leitmotif of the countryside. In place of the Newtonian laws of motion and the immutable arithmetic of the universe, they have sayings. "Red sky at night, your house is alight." "He who ploughs longest ploughs furthest." "If you lie with dogs, you get fleas." (And a criminal record.)

No one in a city ever says this sort of stuff. You don't hear people in the lift to the 22nd floor passing on the wisdom "that you never cast a clout till May is out", or that "many a mickle macks a muckle".

Country people stare at the outside as if it were going to offer an answer to a deep and unspoken existential query. There on the distant horizon, in the peaks, watching a sunset and autumn trees they wait for a sign that never comes. Because the countryside doesn't think anything. It knows nothing. It has no opinion or ambition, no plan, no sense of achievement or failure. It's just a cul-de-sac waiting to be urbanised.

Every winter I devote a number of weekends to trips to the country as a renewal to remind myself of the essential, nihilistic, verdant, grim awfulness of the place. I get done up in tweedy rural dress and stand in fields with other urban men soaking up the essential dullness of it all. We eat things that are brown and sloppy and talk appreciatively of property prices in the city, of restaurants and theatres.

We also naturally take along guns, to kill things. And when in the gloaming we drive back to the city with the smell of mud and blood and wet tweed and dog breath we feel the grateful relief that we have bricks and concrete and glass and neon to return to.



And that we don't have to stare at the ineffable sadness of the stars because there will always be something more interesting to look at. We don't have to talk to people simply because they're the only people to talk to. And there is always an alternative to everything.

Visiting the country is the secular pilgrimage that reminds me that I am blessed with anonymity and sirens. ●

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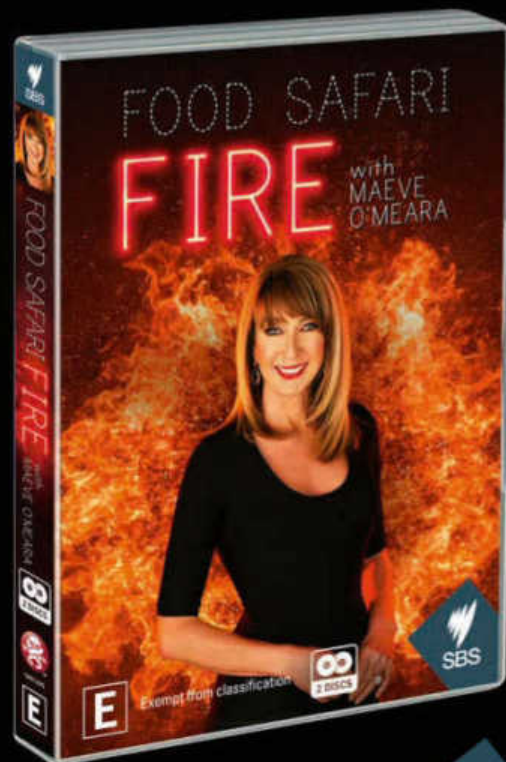
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SBS

A taste of Italy

For our latest *Gourmet Traveller* food hamper we've curated a selection of our favourite Italian products, from local extra-virgin olive oil to handmade biscotti, wild olives and spicy salami. And all just in time for Easter. Buona Pasqua!

1 **Pilu at Freshwater** **extra-virgin Italian** **olive oil, 500ml**

Jayne Bentivoglio at Rylstone Olive Press makes this oil for Sydney chef Giovanni Pilu. Made with Australian-grown olives, it's soft and peppery, and just waiting to be drizzled over a salad or served with bread. "I used to believe the best oil was Italian but Australia is producing outstanding examples, and you can't argue with freshness," says Pilu.

2 **Montalto olives**

These olives grow wild at the Montalto winery in Victoria's Red Hill. They're hand-harvested, cured and marinated with rosemary from the estate garden. Perfect for Easter aperitivi.

3 **Salumi Australia** **cacciatorini,** **290gm**

Hints of red wine and spice feature in this rustic Salumi

Australia cacciatorini, which is produced in the New South Wales Northern Rivers region from 100 per cent Australian pork. Slice it thinly and enjoy it with wine and cheese, or fry it up and toss it with pasta for a sweet-salty hit.

4 **Mauri Taleggio** **+DOP**

Gourmet Traveller's resident cheese expert Will Studd hand-picked this Taleggio. Soft and buttery and encased in a thin, delicate rind, it's been ripened over six weeks in the caves of Lombardy's Valsassina Valley. It's ideal with a glass of Franciacorta, Lombardy's famed sparkling white wine made from pinot noir and chardonnay.

5 **Il Mulino Sardo** **fregola, 500gm**

Our friends at Enoteca Sileno import this roasted fregola from Il Mulino

Sardo in the Sardinian capital, Cagliari. Fregola is just crying out for you to turn it into a seafood stew or an autumn salad.

6 **Garlic and** **tomatoes**

You'll need garlic and tomatoes for your fregola, or any Italian savoury recipes for that matter, which is why we've included Tasmania garlic and tomatoes from a third-generation grower in New South Wales.

7 **Baker D Chirico** **biscotti**

Baker D Chirico's almond biscotti is just one of the bakery treats that fly out

the door at this Melbourne favourite. Accompanied by an espresso, it's guaranteed to impress even the fussiest nonna.

8 **Pizzini 2014 King** **Valley brachetto**

Our wine editor Max Allen nominated the Italian-style wines from the Pizzini family in Victoria's King Valley for this hamper. He chose this moscato-style sparkling brachetto for its vibrancy and clean finish. It's the perfect finale fizz to a long, celebratory Easter lunch. Salute.



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of great taste

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world.

**TASTING
AUSTRALIA**
ADELAIDE / 1-8 MAY 2016


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TASTING AUSTRALIA PRESENTS

In the company of

Tasting Australia's Creative Directors have carefully curated a list of talent that will wow your palate with their expression and sense of adventure. They have been thoughtfully paired with South Australia's leading producers and the best dining venues and chefs for a special moment in culinary history.



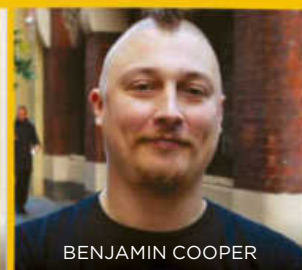
ANTHONY MYINT &
CHRIS KIYUNA



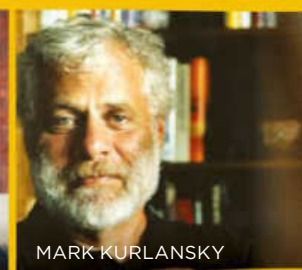
PAUL WEST*



ANDREW MCCONNELL



BENJAMIN COOPER



MARK KURLANSKY

LUNCH IN THE
COMPANY OF
MARK KURLANSKY
AT OSTERIA OGGI

Wednesday 4th May

DINNER AND MASTERCLASS
IN THE COMPANY OF
ANDREW MCCONNELL
AT LEONARDS MILL

Thursday 5th May

DINNER IN THE COMPANY OF
ANTHONY MYINT AND CHRIS
KIYUNA AT THE MARKET SHED
ON HOLLAND

Friday 6th May

LUNCH IN THE COMPANY OF
ANTHONY MYINT AND CHRIS
KIYUNA AT BOTANIC
GARDENS RESTAURANT

Wednesday 4th May

DINNER IN THE
COMPANY OF
MARK KURLANSKY AT
THE INTERCONTINENTAL

Thursday 5th May

A DAY IN THE COMPANY OF
LIZ CARLISLE AND PAUL WEST
AT KALANGADOO ORGANIC
AND BELLWETHER WINES

Saturday 7th May

DINNER IN THE
COMPANY OF
PAUL WEST
AT SEAN'S KITCHEN

Wednesday 4th May

LUNCH IN THE
COMPANY OF
PAUL WEST
AT SAVANNAH FARM

Friday 6th May

LUNCH IN THE
COMPANY OF
BENJAMIN COOPER
AT AFRICOLA

Sunday 8th May

TASTING
AUSTRALIA
ADELAIDE / 1-8 MAY 2016


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*Photo credit
Nick Wilson, Foxtel

LUNCH IN THE
COMPANY OF
**ROBIN WICKENS
AT HENTLEY FARM**

Wednesday 4th May

DINNER IN THE
COMPANY OF
**DAVE PYNT AT PENFOLDS
MAGILL ESTATE RESTAURANT**

Thursday 5th May

DINNER IN THE
COMPANY OF
**LIZ CARLISLE
AT NAYA**

Friday 6th May

A MASTERCLASS
IN THE COMPANY OF
**RODNEY DUNN
AT SPROUT**

Thursday 5th May

LUNCH IN THE
COMPANY OF
**RODNEY DUNN
AT NGERINGA**

Friday 6th May

DINNER IN THE
COMPANY OF
**ROBIN WICKENS
AT THE LANE VINEYARD**

Friday 6th May

LUNCH IN THE
COMPANY OF
**MATT WILKINSON
AT JOLLEY'S BOATHOUSE**

Thursday 5th May

HIGH TEA
IN THE COMPANY OF
**BELINDA JEFFERY AT THE
MAYFLOWER RESTAURANT**

Friday 6th May

A MASTERCLASS IN THE COMPANY OF
**BELINDA JEFFERY AND SOUTH
AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY
WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

Saturday 7th May

LUNCH IN THE
COMPANY OF
**LIZ CARLISLE
AT PANGKARRA FOODS**

Thursday 5th May

DINNER IN THE
COMPANY OF
**MATT WILKINSON
AT TERROIR AUBURN**

Friday 6th May

LUNCH IN THE
COMPANY OF
**DAVE PYNT
AT PRIMO ESTATE**

Saturday 7th May

Book now at tastingaustralia.com.au





Got room for more?

A CHEONG LIEW RETROSPECTIVE 1ST MAY

Join one of Adelaide's premier chefs, Cheong Liew, as he brings back a team of former apprentices who are now culinary masters in their own right for a showcase dinner in the Hilton Adelaide's stunning new restaurant.

A FEW OF MY FAVOURITE THINGS FROM 3RD MAY

Join an insider's guided tour and unearth the secret haunts of some of South Australia's best-known food heroes such as Maggie Beer, Cheong Liew and Jessie Spiby.

SINGLE SITES DINNER 5TH MAY

Discover the role and influence of our physical landscape, climate and wine history as seven of Australia's greatest single vineyard wines are matched to seven beautifully crafted dishes in this very special dining event.

ORIGINS DINNER 7TH MAY

Eat whatever you want, when you want, until it's gone! The best wine and beer makers will be pouring their finest drops as you indulge your senses in a secret Adelaide location. This spectacular event must be experienced to be believed.

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Welcome
to our
world.

**TASTING
AUSTRALIA**
ADELAIDE / 1-8 MAY 2016


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**SOUTH
AUSTRALIA**

MARCH 2016

Chocolate

From top-shelf bars to expertly made confections, plus a double recipe feature, we're rocking chocolate.

Block party We've emerged from our cocoa-induced comas to reveal the best chocolate bars bar none.

Choc therapy Chocolatiers are raising the bar – we round up our favourite places to buy the ultimate choc hits.

Pantry raider: cocoa Enrich both savoury and sweet dishes with this adaptable ingredient.

Masterclass: chocolate mousse cake Chocolate fiends will love the triple-hit in this layered confection.

I should cocoa Perfection in matters chocolate is hard to come by, and it shouldn't be messed with, writes Fergus Henderson.

Hot chocolate desserts Whether played off berries and citrus or wattleseed and sesame, chocolate rocks dessert. Discover Australia's best.

Is cocoa the go? In defence of white chocolate: Annabel Crabb makes the case for the controversial confectionery.

Excess all areas Who said you can have too much of a good thing? Not us. Welcome to our chocolate-recipe extravaganza.





Monsieur Truffe
70% Organic Dark Chocolate
with
Crushed Coffee Beans

Dark
Organic
Chocolate
70% Cacao

Grand Cru
Cuvée
by JERZ KASKA

VALRHONA

bibelot
madagascar 84% grand cru
single origine

WAWA
CHOCOLATIER

AMEDEI
TURKEY
CHUARO
CIOCCOLATO FONDENTE EXTRA
70%

WAWA
CHOCOLATIER

Hunted+Gathered
Fennel Seed
Dark Organic
Chocolate
70% Cacao

SPICE TRAIL

SUE LEWIS
CHOCOLATIER
36%

bibelot
milk chocolate 74%
caramelized almonds

ORIGIN
organic chocolate makers
MADAGASCAR 68

efje
HANDCRAFTED
CHOCOLATE
SMOKED SALT

TOSCANO
BLACK
CIOCCOLATO FONDENTE EXTRA
66%
AMEDEI
TURKEY
66

ZOKOZ
Artisan Chocolate
Guadalcanal
Solomon Islands
78% Cacao
CONTENT

WAWA
CHOCOLATIER

Monsieur Truffe

WORDS MAGGIE SCARDIFIELD PHOTOGRAPHY
BEN HANSEN STYLING AIMEE JONES
BACKGROUND FABRIC STYLIST'S OWN

Block party

We've emerged from our chocolate-induced comas to reveal the findings of our quest for the best chocolate bars bar none.

Move over eggs and bunnies, we've got our sights set on beautiful bars and blocks of high-calibre chocolate to enjoy all year round. With the shelves piled high with chocolate this month, it's the ideal time to discover new flavours. Dark chocolate with smoked salt or fennel seeds, or a classic Valrhona chocolat noir? Caramel crisp spiked with Australian peppermint oil or the sun-dried beans from the Solomon Islands? Blocks, bars, beans and barks – in case of emergency, we present our picks of the best top-cupboard cacaos, here resplendent in their packaging and over the page in their naked glory.

1 Monsieur Truffe 70% Organic Dark Chocolate with Crushed Coffee Beans, \$11.95 for 80gm. **2** Hunted + Gathered 70% Dark Organic Chocolate with Sesame Seed, \$7.50 for 45gm. **3** Cuvée by Deniz Karaca Grand Cru 75% Extra-Dark Chocolate, \$9.90 for 70gm. **4** Valrhona Noir Caraïbe 66% Cacao, \$10.95 for 70gm, from Simon Johnson. **5** Bibelot Madagascar 64% Grand Cru Single-Origin, \$13.50 for 95gm. **6** Wawa Chocolatier Dark Mint Caramel Crisp, \$14.95 for 90gm. **7** Amedei Chuao 70%, \$19.50 for 50gm.

8 Wawa Chocolatier Dark Toasted Sourdough, \$14.95 for 90gm. **9** Valrhona Noir Manjari 64% Cacao Dark Chocolate, \$10.95 for 70gm, from Simon Johnson.

10 Bibelot Madagascar 64% Grand Cru Single Origine, \$13.50 for 95gm. **11** Bibelot 35% Milk Chocolate with Caramelised Almonds, \$13.50 for 95gm. **12** Hunted + Gathered 70% Dark Organic Chocolate with

Fennel Seed, \$7.50 for 45gm. **13** Liefje 78% Cacao Spice Trail, \$8.95 for 55gm. **14** Bahen & Co 80% Cacao House Blend, \$9.90 for 75gm. **15** Sue Lewis Chocolatier 36% Caramelised Milk Chocolate with Crunchy Pearls, \$8 for 50gm. **16** Zokoko 78% Cacao Guadalcana Solomon Islands Pure Origin, \$13.95 for 85gm. **17** Origin Organic Chocolate Makers Madagascar 68%, \$7.95 for 100gm. **18** Liefje 80% Cacao Smoked Salt, \$8.95 for 55gm. **19** Amedei Toscano Black 66%, \$9.50 for 50gm. **20** Monsieur Truffe 70% Bean to Bar Single Origin Papua New Guinea, \$11.95 for 80gm. **21** Wawa Chocolatier Dark Balsamic Salted Caramel, \$14.95 for 90gm. **22** Ladurée La Mini Tablette 41% Milk, \$9 for 42gm. **23** Sue Lewis Chocolatier 75% Venezuela Single Origin, \$8 for 50gm. **24** Ladurée La Mini Tablette 64% Dark, \$9 for 42gm. *Stockists p183.*



TASTING

1 Belle Fleur Chilli and Crushed Cocoa Nib Dark Chocolate, \$7.60 for 55gm.

2 Belle Fleur Uganda 80% Cocoa, \$8.25 for 90gm.

3 Callebaut Bittersweet Chocolate 54.5% Cocoa Solids, \$30 for 1kg, from Harris Farm Markets.

4 Just Bliss Dark Chocolate Easter Theme Block, \$45 for 750gm. **5** Red Cacao Coffee, Hazelnut and Mandarin Milk Chocolate, \$9.50 for 75gm. **6** Murielle Vuilleumier Swiss Chocolatier 88% Cacao, \$795 for 100gm. **7** Lindt Excellence Smooth Blend 70% Cocoa, \$3.99 for 100gm. **8** Monsieur Truffe Venezuela Dark Chocolate 65%, \$25 for six assorted 20gm single-origin bars.

9 Cioccolato Lombardo Sourdough Milk Chocolate bar with dark chocolate Easter decoration, \$19.50 for 150gm. **10** Winnow Chocolates Blackberry and Lime Organic White Chocolate, \$9.95 for 80gm.

11 Lindsay & Edmunds Organic Roasted Cocoa pieces in Belgian milk chocolate, \$19.99 for 165gm.

12 Red Cacao São Tomé and Príncipe Single Origin 70% Cacao, \$8 for 42gm.

13 Burch & Purchase Persian Delight Dark Chocolate 60% Cocoa Solids with Iranian Pistachios, \$15 for 100gm.

14 Fortunato No 4 Organic Peruvian Pure Nacional Dark Couverture Chocolate, \$14.50 for 100gm, from Anvers Confectionery.

15 Just Bliss Dark Chocolate Freeze-Dried Strawberry, Pistachio and Gold Leaf block, \$45 for 750gm.

16 Just Bliss White Chocolate Freeze-Dried Raspberry and Pistachio tile, \$6.95 for 85gm.

17 Winnow Chocolates Salted Hazelnut Crunch Organic Milk Chocolate, \$9.95 for 80gm.

18 Amedei Toscano Black 66%, \$60.50 for 1kg. *Stockists p183.* ●

MORE ONLINE



Stop hunting. From bars to truffles, eggs to bunnies, we've got more of our chocolate picks online:

gourmettraveller.com.au





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Choc therapy

Chocolatiers throughout the country are raising the bar on chocolate-making to a dark art form. Here's a round-up of our favourite places to shop for the ultimate choc hits.

Bean-to-bar. Single origin. White, dark or milk. Truffles, freckles, blocks and brownies. Tempered, buffed and ready to roll. Bunnies, eggs, baubles and bonbons. You want fine chocolate, and these dedicated professionals are here to give it to you. Take no prisoners.

NEW SOUTH WALES

KAKAWA

Kakawa chocolatier and pastry chef Jin Sun Kim worked under Swiss-trained master chocolatier Keith Hurdman at Melt in London's Notting Hill. Together with her partner, David Ralph, Kim has brought some of Notting Hill's white-painted English charm to her two Sydney shops. The Darlinghurst site is where everything is handmade; Kim and her three chefs can be seen making (then serving) truffles, say, so as you satisfy your cacao craving you can quiz them on what's in the rocky road (a dark house-blend of Valrhona, São Tomé and Caribbean single-origin chocolate with cherry brandy and cherry purée) or the individually wrapped chocolate cigars (salted hazelnut praline with rice bubbles one day, peanut butter and strawberry the next). "In winter we tend to use more alcohol and nuts or beautiful spices infused with cream," Kim says. "In summer it's all about citrus, cherries and mangoes." Six varieties of hot chocolate, including a chilli- or brandy-spiked version, and freshly churned ice-cream sandwiches are also part of Kakawa's magic. If you're interested in DIY, the store hosts various

tutorials, from talk-and-taste nights to tempering workshops. *Kakawa, 147 William St, Darlinghurst, (02) 9331 8818; Gaffa Gallery, ground floor, 281 Clarence St, Sydney, (02) 9283 0678, kakawachocolates.com.au*

JUST WILLIAM CHOCOLATES

This beloved hole-in-the-wall was opened 32 years ago by company director Suzanne Francis and her third-generation-chocolatier husband, Rodney. "We'd always dreamed of having our own shop, and now we have adult customers who used to come in when they were children," she says. Today the chocolates stocked at Just William aren't made by the Francis family, but are sourced instead from some of the best chocolatiers in Sydney. The cornucopia of chocolate wares includes the likes of marshmallow domes and lemon myrtle-flavoured crèmes, doily-lined silver trays of dark chocolate-dipped orange peel, truffles dusted with everything from gold leaf to blueberry crumb, honeycomb-spiced bark and Turkish delight. For the purists, the likes of Champagne-filled chocolate bombs are served by a white-gloved shopkeeper. For something a bit off-piste, there's the chocolate-covered jelly snakes. "We keep them under the counter for regulars because we can't keep up with the demand." *Just William, 4 William St, Paddington, (02) 9331 5468, justwilliam.com.au*

VICTORIA

BIBELOT

Bibelot (pronounced *bib-loh*) means trinket or small curio or ornament. It would be a stretch of the imagination to call Bibelot's spacious double shopfront small, but there's certainly plenty to treasure here. With terrazzo and timber floors, and floods of natural light, it encompasses a gelateria, retail space, a lengthy glass, brass and marble display case bright with intricately crafted cakes, rainbow-hued macarons and jewel-like chocolates, a sleek café area and glassed-in chocolate kitchen. The chocolate (or bonbon) range, made in-house by two full-time chocolatiers using a mix of Valrhona, Felchlin and Cacao Barry couverture, is truly gorgeous to behold and runs to about 18 flavours at any given time, from classic caramel through to coriander, peanut butter and celery, and tonka bean and mandarin. Then there's a range of

nine chocolate bars (three white, three milk, three dark), seasonally appropriate chocolate figures and a range of various nut and chocolate combinations, such as macadamia nuts coated with dark chocolate and coconut. There's also two constantly running chocolate taps – one milk, one dark – for anybody wishing to choc-top their caramel and milk-chocolate fudge gelati. And there's a small selection of hard-to-find books about chocolate for sale, so you can read all about it too. *Bibelot, 285-287 Coventry St, South Melbourne, (03) 9690 2688, bibelot.com.au*

BURCH & PURCHASE

It's hard to avoid the Willy Wonka comparisons at Burch & Purchase. It's not just a regular shop; it's a "sweet studio". It has a theatrical open kitchen replete with a small fleet of uniformed chefs. There are "edible canvases" – large pictures of colourful gardens where all the flowers, butterflies and foliage can be plucked and eaten. The glass cases running the length of the shop are full of almost impossibly vibrantly coloured sweet stuff, set against a colour scheme that leans towards saccharine pinks, yellows and whites. There are 15 different chocolate bars, a dazzling array of ice-cream flavours, edible chocolate baubles at Christmas, chocolate kangaroos for Australia Day, cute choc-pops on sticks all year round. Strictly speaking, B&P is not just a chocolate shop (it also deals in choc-free desserts and cakes) but the quality of the chocolate and the care and skill of Darren Purchase and his team – their éclair, for example, is filled with a cream made with 67 per cent Madagascan single-origin chocolate – make the sweet studio a must for connoisseurs and fun-lovers alike. *Burch & Purchase Sweet Studio, 647 Chapel St, South Yarra, (03) 9827 7060, burchandpurchase.com.*

CIOCCOLATO LOMBARDO

New Jersey native Tad Lombardo started his working life as an engineer with a side interest in chocolate-making which, after a contract to make Ben Shewry's signature salted caramel-centred pukeko eggs at Attica, has turned full-time. Lombardo started selling chocolate he made at home from a cart at the Prahran Market in 2011, then moved into a booth-sized, glassed-in stall in the centre of the Market Hall in 2013. Late last



CHOC AND AWE

A choc-rich menu at Bibelot. Clockwise from far right: gâteaux are dispensed at Burch & Purchase; Bibelot's macarons and sweet curios; Just William and its bark bites; Murielle Vuilleumier.





year it doubled in size (but it's still probably the smallest chocolate shop in town), incorporating a separate kitchen and retail space. In these tiny confines, Lombardo creates a remarkable range, in terms of both variety and the quality of the chocolate he uses (Felchlin and Weiss couverture). He regularly has 10 to 14 varieties of flavoured chocolate (habanero, mint, pumpkin spice, sage, pale ale, for example) and makes about 2,000 milk- and dark-chocolate frogs filled with a rich, slightly burnt salted caramel every month, and still can't keep up with demand. The renovation has allowed Lombardo to expand his range to include cakes and brownies, while a small seating area to one side means he's now able to serve hot chocolate, made from granulated chocolate. It's a level of activity that makes the small dimensions of Cioccolato Lombardo decidedly Tardis-like. *Cioccolato Lombardo, shop 97, Prahran Market, 163 Commercial Rd, South Yarra, (03) 9826 2092, cioccolatolombardo.com*

MONSIEUR TRUFFE

Melbourne loves cafés and retail spaces with an industrial aesthetic and Monsieur Truffe delivers all the right white-tiled, concrete-floored,

second-hand timber-shelved, exposed-brick moves flawlessly. What's refreshing about this industrial space, though, is that it includes actual industry in the form of the working chocolate-making machinery, separated from the café and retail spaces by glass, with which owner Thibault Fregoni produces a large range of bars, flavoured chocolate, drinking chocolate and cocoa powder with his meticulous precision. Fregoni uses artisan (and often organic) couverture chocolate but also has the machinery and skills to be able to produce "bean to bar" chocolate bars in his Lygon Street factory-showroom-café. There's also an impressive range of single-origin bars using chocolate sourced from Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Madagascar, Bolivia, Ecuador and Brazil. Some of the bars are dark, others milk, but they all come with tasting notes highlighting the way each region's cacao beans express themselves. There's an undeniable hipster aesthetic in terms of the packaging (textured, rough-hewn, minimal), but there's enough authenticity, knowledge and experience at work here to make it more definitive than derivative. Just like its Bean to Bar line, Monsieur Truffe is the real thing. *Monsieur Truffe, 351 Lygon St, East Brunswick, (03) 9380 4915, monsieurtruffechocolate.com*

MILKY WAYS

Clockwise from far left: great things come from tiny Cioccolato Lombardo; Couverture & Co; Monsieur Truffe; Brian Edwards (left) and Ugo Cocchis of Monsieur Truffe.

QUEENSLAND

MURIELLE VUILLEUMIER SWISS CHOCOLATIER

Temperatures in inner-city Brisbane's Newstead can soar into the high 30s and beyond, with punishing humidity prevailing at any time of the year. But inside Swiss-espatrian chocolatier Murielle Vuilleumier's pocket-sized shop it always feels like a cool summer's day in Geneva – the space is climatically controlled to run between 18C and 20C at 55 to 65 per cent humidity, 24 hours a day. "Customers always ask how should they keep their chocolates and I tell them the ideal is 16C to 22C, so a wine fridge is great if they have one," Vuilleumier says. "I tell them to stick them next to the Champagne." It's an apt location. A glance at the tightly curated collection of 16 filled varieties of chocolate on display underlines Vuilleumier's studied approach to small-batch production. She uses only Swiss couverture, sourced from niche producer Felchlin, which is made using South American beans. Each handmade piece takes 24 to 48 hours to finish. Moulds are individually hand-washed, air-dried and buffed with a cotton-wool ball for at least 10 minutes before each use. The ultra-glossy finished products always receive white-glove handling to avoid scratches. "It's a quality thing," she says. "I don't want chocolates on my shelf if I'm not 120 per cent happy with them." *Murielle Vuilleumier Swiss Chocolatier, shop 3, 113 Commercial Rd, Teneriffe, (07) 3358 6008, muriellevuilleumier.com.*

COUVERTURE & CO

Former journalist Jessica Brookes is now owner and chocolatier at Brisbane small-batch chocolate-maker Couverture & Co. In the cabinet at her smart shop in the city's inner west you'll find around 20 different hand-tempered, hand-dipped and hand-piped treats filled with everything from old-school standards such as peppermint cream and raspberry ganache to more experimental offerings such as an almost savoury pepper and Port mix, orange and poppy seed, or a tonka bean and white-chocolate ganache. Brookes creates about 70 chocolates each session, producing

between four and five different flavour combinations per batch in the climate-controlled kitchen. She learned the craft working for two years alongside Melissa Atkinson of Brisbane's dearly missed Bittersweet the Chocolate Boutique and uses Callebaut chocolate exclusively, praising the Belgian couverture for its gentle multipurpose charms. "It's quite versatile and the dark chocolate isn't too fruity or domineering," Brookes says. *Couverture & Co, 19A, Enoggera Tce, Red Hill, (07) 3367 3000, couvertureandco.com.au*

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

STEVEN TER HORST

Friends thought Steven ter Horst mad when he spent 2006 trying to perfect salted caramel. Since then his outstanding fleur de sel truffles have propelled the popularity of his handmade chocolates and tasting café in Adelaide's Rundle Street. Trained as a chef but deeply averse to the attitude in commercial kitchens, the genial ter Horst walked away from cooking for a decade, taking other career paths (banking, teaching English in Japan) before returning to Adelaide to specialise in chocolate. In the front room of his suburban townhouse he spent two-and-a-half years experimenting with blends and brands of Belgian couverture to find the profile and length of flavour he wanted. The centres are flavoured with authentic ingredients rather than concentrates – think Ardbeg single-malt whisky. His partner, Chantelle Giardina (who has her own Maius chocolate brand), roasts cacao beans to produce single-origin chocolate bars, and plans with ter Horst to produce the first all-Australian bar using beans from Queensland's Mossman Gorge. Ter Horst also plans to make petit gâteaux with Basket Range wine. "You've got to keep exploring ideas to keep the public interested," he explains, pointing to his Aztec spice range of chilli and spice-flavoured chocolates. *Steven ter Horst Chocolatier, 256 Rundle St, Adelaide, (08) 7226 6216, steventerhorst.com.au*

JUST BLISS

Turkish-born Gulcay Uysal started making Just Bliss chocolates by hand at her family home in the Adelaide Hills, choosing a different food direction from her parents, renowned for baking Adelaide's first loaves of pide. Now she has a production facility and handsome shop in the heart of Adelaide. Uysal's winning chocolate blends are complemented by beautiful presentation and packaging, which helped accelerate Just Bliss's success in so many retail outlets Uysal felt compelled to open her own outlet. Managed by her sister Yasemin, the elegant Gawler Place store presents its range of 16 couverture chocolates and

12 truffles beside such ever-popular confections as white chocolate and raspberry-covered nuts dusted with icing sugar. Customer inquiries have inspired an acclaimed range of sugar-free chocs (using alcohol by-product maltitol as its sweetening agent), and its superior chocolate blends feature in a popular Easter egg range. The store has also introduced a café serving a range of cakes and such Middle Eastern treats as pistachio baklava. Bliss indeed. *Just Bliss, 5/38 Gawler Pl, Adelaide, (08) 7225 4872, justbliss.com.au*

RED CACAO

Marcus Booth-Remmers worked pastry in leading Adelaide restaurants (Bridgewater Mill and Magill Estate among them) but his true passion was always working with chocolate. After five years in Europe studying chocolate-making, he returned to the Adelaide Hills and opened Red Cacao in Stirling. He considers it a European-style chocolate café, selling his own pralines, truffles and blocks made from single-origin chocolate, but also>

DARK ARTS

Clockwise from top: Couverture & Co; Steven ter Horst; a treasure trove by Murielle; Just Bliss; some of Red Cacao's range.

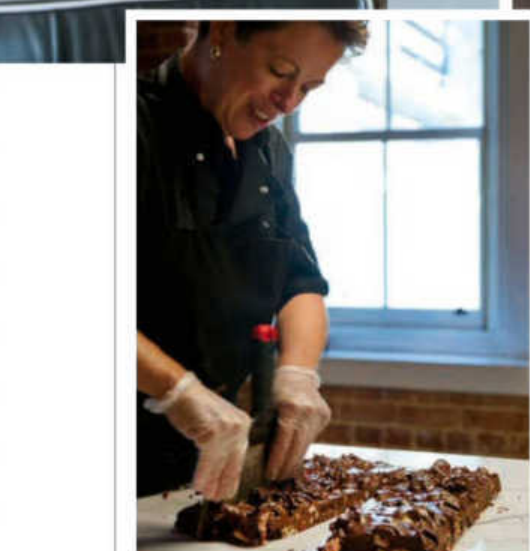


EAT OUT



LA DOLCE VITA

Clockwise from top left: Sweet Envy's Alistair Wise; Sweet Envy chocolates; The Cat's Tongue's chocolates; peanut-butter-and-jelly cupcakes at Sweet Envy; Sue Lewis.



presenting a range of chocolate experiences, from drinks to tasting plates. Unique tastes include truffles filled with Lobethal Road shiraz, and Belgian hot chocolate is a highlight, while staff like suggesting individual chocolates to match cups of single-origin coffee. "It's like introducing fine-dining ideas into a café," Booth-Remmers says. "The idea is for people to stop, sit down and really taste the chocolate. Not just eat it, but to be consumed by it." The café's Friday evening dessert bar offers a weekly menu of plated desserts, and is a big hit with locals, who like to sprawl on lawns opposite the shop and graze on the good stuff till 10 on fine evenings. *Red Cacao*, shop 3/41 Mount Barker Rd, Stirling, (08) 8339 3128, redcacao.com.au

TASMANIA

SWEET ENVY

Where to start in this fairytale pâtisserie? Alistair Wise and his cake-guru wife, Teena Kearney-Wise, have a knack such that everything in their tiny

shop demands to be eaten. Especially the chocolate. They make several fun chocolatey creations, including Mit Mats (a chocolate biscuit sandwich, filled with creamy frosting and ganache and submerged in melted chocolate) which, yes, is Alistair's cheeky ode to Tim Tams. The impossibly rich Dreaming of Chocolate Gaytime may not be quite as famous as the ice-cream it honours, but with its layers of chocolate pastry, crunchy chocolate-cornflake mix, and dark chocolate mousse encasing a raspberry compote, all coated in dark chocolate, it's so much better. Chunky Monkey is the ultimate brownie, and the chocolate salty caramel tart has a base of quite perfect chocolate shortcrust pastry. But the absolute must-try is Wise's Opéra cake. Utterly classic, its 14 layers of ganache, sponge, and butter cream make for a truly delicious, beautiful combination. 341 Elizabeth St, North Hobart, (03) 6234 8805. sweetenvy.com

THE CAT'S TONGUE

Although it's a café on weekends, with an all-day menu of tasty dishes, at heart this shop is Andy Abramowich's chocolate laboratory, where he ponders, invents and produces the best chocolates in Tasmania. He's generally willing to admit to them being the best chocolates in Huonville but he underestimates himself. Although recently, having taken delivery of a new automatic tempering machine, he's hinted that he's ripe

for world domination. We can recommend everything, but the coconut-based chocolate he calls KL Delight, inspired by the flavours of his Penang childhood, is a standout, as is a sesame-flavoured chocolate that somehow beautifully balances tahini and hazelnut, with some crunch from a sesame brittle garnish. Abramowich's chocolates are on sale here when the café is open but also available at West Hobart's Hill Street Grocer and other good Hobart shops. *The Cat's Tongue*, shop 3, 11-13 Wilmot Rd, Huonville, 0428 411 455. thecatstongue.com.au

WA

SUE LEWIS CHOCOLATIER

Western Australia's chocolate renaissance continues to tick along nicely, thanks to the sustained efforts of regional champions like Denmark's John Wade (Dark Side Chocolates) and Margaret River bean-to-bar chocolate makers Bahen & Co, and Gabriel. Closer to the city, Sue Lewis is one of the movement's key figures and her move to a shiny new CBD workshop is good news for Perth chocolate-fanciers. Armed with chocolate from Valrhona, Michel Cluizel and Bahen & Co, she produces a distinctive range of treats with native flavours a key leitmotif. Milk-chocolate blocks studded with sandalwood nuts are one instance of this pro-WA stance, while truffle flavours run the gamut from red gum honey to lemon-myrtle curd. *Sue Lewis Chocolatier*, State Buildings, Cnr St Georges Tce & Barrack St, Perth, 0452 423 323, suelewischocolatier.com.au



Sue Lewis is one of the key figures in the *chocolate renaissance* in the West and her move to a shiny new CBD workshop is good news for Perth chocolate-fanciers.

Cocoa

Whether you prefer Dutch-process or natural, step out of the chocolate box and enrich both savoury and sweet dishes with this adaptable ingredient.

Cocoa is a surprisingly versatile stand-by and it pays to know what you're getting. Cocoa powder, fermented, dried and roasted cacao beans, ground into a fine powder, comes in several forms, the two most common being natural cocoa and Dutch-process cocoa. Natural cocoa is light in colour with high acidity, while Dutch-process cocoa has been through a washing process, using a potassium carbonate solution, which alkalises it, producing a mellow, earthy flavour and dark colour. We prefer Dutch-process cocoa for the complexity of flavour it adds to dishes and that rich hue.

Of course, cocoa comes into its own in sweets, but it also adds deep flavour to savoury dishes, too. It's a natural match for rich meats such as venison and a popular addition to Mexican mole.

Dutch-process cocoa is available from delicatessens and specialty food shops. It's a bit pricier than its supermarket cousin, but its intensity means a little bit goes a lot further.

Chocolate self-saucing pud

Serves 4

➤ Preheat oven to 180C. Sieve **130gm plain flour**, **2½ tbsp Dutch-process cocoa** and **1 tsp baking powder** into a bowl, add **80gm caster sugar** and a **pinch of salt**, and stir to combine. Add **125ml (½ cup) milk**, **50gm melted butter** and **1 egg**, mix to a smooth batter, then spoon into a buttered 1-litre ovenproof dish and smooth top. Whisk **220gm brown sugar**, **2½ tbsp sieved Dutch-process cocoa** and **250ml boiling water** in a bowl, pour carefully over batter and bake until centre springs back when pressed (20-25 minutes). Serve with **ice-cream** or **cream**.

Spice-rubbed pork ribs

Serves 4

➤ Combine **35gm (⅓ cup) cocoa** in a bowl with **60gm brown sugar**, **2 tsp ground chilli**, **2 tsp smoked paprika**, **1 tsp ground ginger** and **2 tsp salt**. Add **1 tbsp Dijon mustard** and coat **2 racks of pork ribs** (2.8kg) with rub. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight, removing from the fridge an hour before cooking. Preheat oven to 140C, place ribs in a roasting pan and roast, turning occasionally, until tender (40-45 minutes), then place on a wire rack over a baking tray. Increase oven to 220C and roast ribs, turning once or twice, until browned (15-20 minutes). Serve with **lime wedges** and **slaw**.

Tiramisù

Serves 4

➤ Combine **150ml espresso** in a jug with **50ml each Marsala** and **golden rum**. Whisk **4 egg yolks**, **2 tbsp caster sugar** and **1 tbsp Marsala** in a bowl over a saucepan of simmering water until thick and pale (3-4 minutes). Whisk **300gm mascarpone** and **100ml pouring cream** in a bowl until smooth, then fold in **egg yolk** mixture. Spoon a little mascarpone mixture into glasses and dust with **cocoa**. Dip **savoardi biscuits** (you'll need about 8) into coffee mixture, then break into pieces to fit into glasses, forming a layer over mascarpone. Repeat layering, finishing with mascarpone and a dusting of cocoa. Refrigerate overnight and serve freshly dusted with **cocoa**.

Chicken mole

Serves 4-6

➤ Toast **2 torn corn tortillas** and **2 tbsp pumpkin seeds** in a dry frying pan over medium-high heat until evenly browned (2-3 minutes), then process in a food processor with **1 chopped Spanish onion**, **2 chopped long red chillies** and **2 garlic cloves** to a paste. Heat **2 tbsp olive oil** in a large saucepan over medium-high heat, add onion mixture, and sauté until tender (4-5 minutes), then add **2 tsp each ground cumin**, **ground coriander** and **ground pasilla chilli**, and **2 cinnamon quills**. Fry until fragrant (1 minute), then add **250ml chicken stock**, **200ml tomato polpa** and **1 finely chopped chipotle chilli in adobo**, and bring to a simmer. Add **8 skinless chicken thigh fillets**, season to taste, cover with a lid, reduce heat to low and simmer until chicken is tender (6-8 minutes). Remove chicken from pan and set aside. When cool enough to handle, coarsely shred meat. Meanwhile, add **2 tbsp Dutch-process cocoa** to pan, simmer until sauce thickens and reduces slightly (10-15 minutes), then return meat to pan, heat through, check seasoning and serve with **steamed rice**, **coriander**, **crumbled feta** and **lime wedges**.

HOT TIP

+ Dutch-process cocoa will keep in an airtight jar in the pantry for up to three years. Be sure to always sieve it before use, whether for sweet or savoury dishes, or it will clump together.

MOLE Marble board and linen napkin from Papaya. Cream bowl (with mole) and blue bowl from Bison Australia. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

Chicken mole

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Chocolate mousse cake

Chocolate fiends will love the triple-hit in this layered confection, writes **Catherine Adams**.

Prepare to be happy. This layered chocolate mousse cake has a lovely texture and rich chocolate flavour, yet is simple to make. The beauty of it is that it can also be made ahead and frozen in preparation for a special occasion and, of course, it's perfect for Easter feasts.

For the cake base, I like to use a roulade sponge – it has no fat content so it can be refrigerated without becoming hard, and it has a lovely light texture that balances well with mousse. Whisk the yolks and some of the sugar in an electric mixer on medium speed, being careful not to overwhisk or the sponge will be dense; this goes for whisking the eggwhites, too – just whisk them till they hold stiff peaks. When folding the eggwhites into the yolks, and then the cocoa-cornflour

mixture, fold the mixture just until everything is incorporated to reduce the loss of aeration. And sieve your cocoa and cornflour first to avoid any lumps.

To give the cake base a richer flavour, brush it liberally with a simple light sugar syrup with an added liqueur of your choice; I like Grand Marnier, a classic pairing with chocolate. Do the brushing when both the syrup and sponge are cool. The syrup not only introduces another flavour, but it also helps to prevent the sponge drawing moisture out of the mousse, which would cause it to dry out and shrink.

Next comes the mousse. There are many ways to make chocolate mousse, but this method is my favourite – the secret is to use whipped cream, which aerates the mixture,

resulting in a beautiful texture that melts in your mouth, while the flavour is nicely rounded and not too sweet. The important factors are the fat, or cream, and the type of chocolate, of course. You cannot interchange the chocolate in this recipe – there is a fine balance of liquid to chocolate. If you use a chocolate with a percentage higher or lower than 53 per cent cocoa solids the mousse won't have the best texture. With a lower content it will not set properly, and as you go higher the mousse will become firmer and eventually split and have a terrible texture.

When you're mixing the mousse it's most important to form a good emulsion when you add the syrup and the initial quantity of cream to the chocolate; otherwise it won't set properly. Once the syrup has been incorporated you should have a smooth, shiny, slightly elastic emulsion; before adding the cream, whip it to just before soft peaks form.

An emulsion is the combining of two ingredients that don't normally combine, fat and liquid. This is key to achieving a smooth, creamy texture, and it enhances the true taste of the chocolate. If the emulsion is not achieved, the mix becomes unstable and when the remaining whisked cream is folded into the chocolate, the two don't combine properly. If you're mixing by hand, mix energetically with small circular movements in the centre of the mixture to ensure the fat and water become homogenous, which stabilises the mixture; visually it will be elastic and shiny. Generally, if you're using a stick blender it will emulsify well.

The icing is straightforward; use it when it has cooled but is still fluid. Once the mousse has set in the fridge for at least six hours, pour the icing on top while it's in the ring and tilt it to cover the entire surface. At this point the cake can be frozen (for up to a month); defrost it in the fridge when you're ready to serve it.

Once the icing has set, remove the ring. If you're using a deep metal ring or springform tin, gently heat the outside with a blowtorch

MOUSSE CAKE

All props stylist's own. **STEPS** Batch Ceramics bowls and dishes from Simon Johnson. Apron from Stone. KitchenAid

stand mixer. Copper spoon from Design Twins. Marble board and copper tray from Inartisan. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.



Chocolate
mousse cake



until it easily slips off the cake; or run a hot knife around the inside of the ring, then refrigerate the cake again to firm it up.

If you're using acetate sheets, as we have here, just peel them away from the cake; no heat is required. Acetate sheets are great for creating a higher mould; just cut them to your desired height and line the inside of the mould.

We've decorated the cake with chocolate curls; you could also use roasted nuts, praline or berries. Or coat the cake completely in chocolate. Spray a fine mist of canola spray onto a bench and put a piece of plastic wrap large enough to cover the cake on top, smoothing it out to remove all the creases. Pour melted chocolate in the centre, then spread it with a palette knife into a disc large enough to cover the top and sides of the cake. The chocolate only needs to be 2mm-3mm thick. Have the cake close to you then pick up the plastic wrap by the corners furthest away and place it chocolate-side down on the cake, ensuring it hangs down to cover the sides. Smooth down the sides and run a small knife around the base of the cake to form a neat edge. Refrigerate it for at least 10 minutes or until you're ready to serve, then simply peel off the plastic wrap and decorate it.

To serve, use a warm knife to cut the cake and don't leave it sitting at room temperature for long, or it will soften. I serve it with crème Chantilly (whipped cream sweetened with icing sugar and vanilla) – it's billowy and perfect with the lush mousse.

Chocolate mousse cake

Prep time 30 mins, cook 25 mins
(plus cooling, chilling)

Serves 10

Caster sugar, for dusting

Chocolate curls, to serve

Chocolate sponge

- 4 egg yolks
- 170 gm pure icing sugar, sieved
- 185 gm eggwhites (about 6)
- 65 gm Dutch-process cocoa powder
- 20 gm cornflour

Soaking syrup

- 25 gm caster sugar
- 1½ tsp Grand Marnier, or liqueur of choice

Chocolate truffle mousse

- 325 gm dark chocolate buttons (53% cocoa solids)
- 68 gm liquid glucose
- 68 gm caster sugar
- 475 gm pouring cream

Chocolate icing

- 150 gm dark chocolate buttons (53% solids)
- 60 gm pouring cream

STEP BY STEP

1 For sponge, preheat oven to 190C. Line an oven tray with buttered baking paper and dust with caster sugar. Whisk yolks and 160gm icing sugar in an electric mixer on medium-high speed until thick and a ribbon holds (4-5 minutes). Be careful not to overwhisk the mixture.

2 Whisk eggwhites in a separate bowl with remaining sugar just until stiff peaks form.

3 Fold a third of the eggwhite into yolks, then fold in remaining. Just before eggwhites are completely incorporated, sieve cocoa and cornflour over and fold to just combine.

4 Gently spread batter onto prepared tray to a 22cm-diameter round with a palette knife (mixture will continue to spread a little; which is fine), then bake until cake springs back when gently pressed (12-18 minutes). Set aside to cool completely (25-30 minutes).

5 Trim cake to fit into a 22cm-diameter ring mould or the ring of a springform tin, using the mould as a guide. Place ring on a tray lined with baking paper, then line ring with strips of acetate sheet to increase the height (see note). Place cake base inside and set aside.


6 For soaking syrup, bring sugar and 50gm water to the boil in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Allow to cool, then add liqueur and brush liberally over sponge.

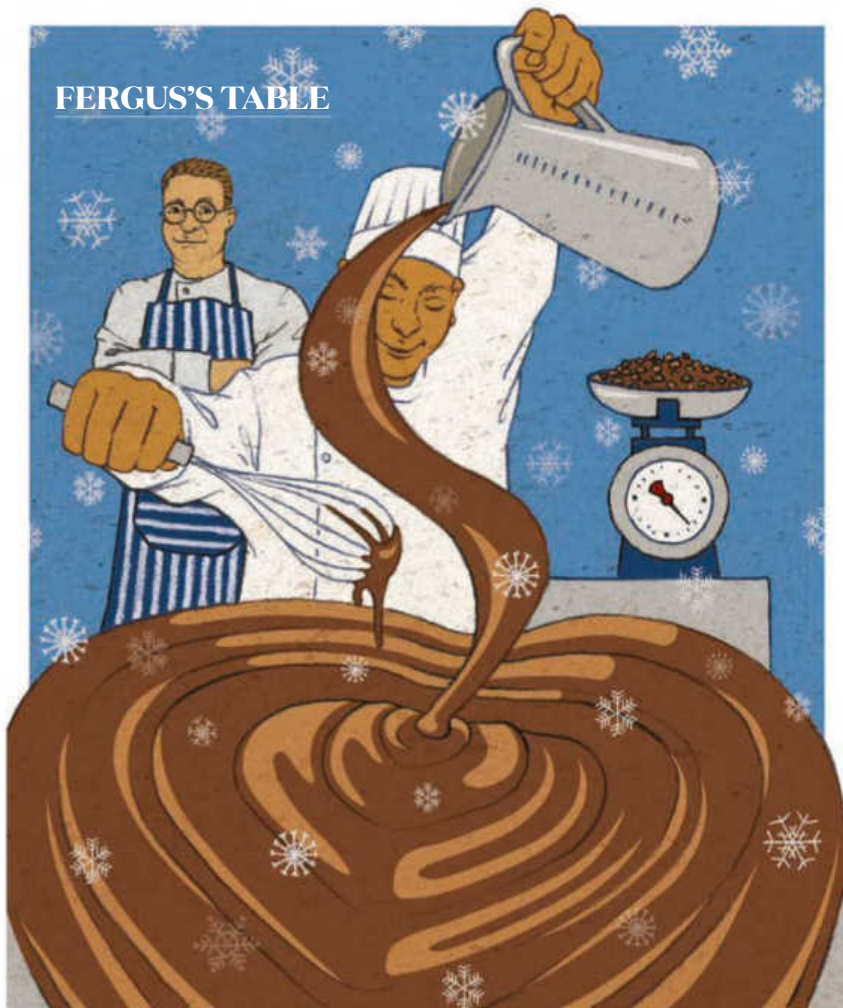
7 For mousse, place chocolate in a heatproof bowl and have a spatula on hand. Stir glucose, sugar and 68gm water in a small saucepan over low heat to dissolve sugar, then increase heat to high and bring to the boil. Remove from heat, pour directly onto chocolate and stand for a minute, then mix vigorously from the centre with a spatula until chocolate becomes smooth, glossy, elastic and reaches 35C on a sugar thermometer.

8 Whisk cream just until soft peaks form, add a quarter to chocolate mixture and mix vigorously from the centre to combine, then fold in remaining cream in small additions.

9 Pour chocolate mousse into ring over cake and refrigerate covered until set (6 hours or overnight)

10 For icing, melt chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water. Bring cream and 60gm water to the boil in a saucepan over medium-high heat, pour onto chocolate and stir until smooth. Cool, then pour onto cake in the ring and refrigerate to set (30 minutes to 1 hour). Remove ring and acetate sheets, and serve cake chilled topped with chocolate curls.

Note Acetate sheets are available from art-supply shops. 



I should cocoa

Perfection in matters chocolate is hard to come by, and it shouldn't be messed with, writes **Fergus Henderson**.

I was young and carefree eating in Harry's Bar in Venice with my mum and dad. Michael York was at the next table and I thought how good it was, eating with d'Artagnan in the room. The scene was set for a significant culinary moment, and boy did it come. That moment was a chocolate ice-cream that imparted total and utter satisfaction. I was already a chocolate enthusiast, but instead of quenching my chocolate thirst, this excited it unforgettably.

There are many types of chocolate ice-cream, starting with the pointless and tasteless. This is stuff that should never be allowed to call itself chocolate ice-cream; it is simply disappointment in a bowl. Then there is the type that inspires confidence with its good, dark hue, but this is the moment when the true schizoid nature of chocolate ice-cream is revealed. Schizoid ice-cream? I'm referring to a separation: the sweetness hits, then the chocolate goes off at a tangent, the flavour being a mere echo of what it once was. Luckily (and I feel I have earned the right to boast here), we now have the almost perfect chocolate ice-cream at St John. We worked at the recipe for at least 10 years, and it proved to be no small task.

Behind every chef there is another chef – and in this case, it was a pastry chef. God bless those chefs.

“They say that chocolate produces the same effect on the body as being in love. And, like love, chocolate is essential to happiness.”

I had Justin, who was mine for a long time. Rare among some young Jedi knights in the kitchen, the Force was strong with this one. I told my knight about that perfect ice-cream of my youth and I was delighted that he wanted to rise to the challenge. One day, on his break, he produced 10 different versions of the ice-cream we were looking for, and that was just the beginning.

When we started meddling with the sweetness we found that we were in danger of creating a dry, dusty-tasting, unsatisfactory conclusion. The problem is this: the smooth taste and texture of ice-cream come down in part to the sugar. So how were we to make properly bitter-chocolate ice-cream? We tried a growing scale of cocoa solids to a decreasing scale of cocoa butter; we even tried adding espresso to the mix to help the bitter qualities. But these additions did not help; they merely confused the unity of the ice-cream.

We became increasingly frustrated, and were on the verge of giving up, when the solution came to us in a particularly lucid moment: we make a dark, bitter caramel and add this to the mix. This way you get the sugar content up, resulting in that proper rich, creamy ice-cream while at the same time improving the crucial bitter aspect. But we weren't done yet.

Reinvigorated by our success, we tracked down a single-estate chocolate from Venezuela, with 73.5 per cent cocoa solids. Ice-cream for the true chocolate enthusiast. Such is the richness of this stuff that we only serve one scoop per bowl, which is ample to set anyone up for the afternoon. Interestingly, like fine wine, this ice-cream improves with age, which goes against the grain, given that most ice-cream likes to be freshly churned.

They say that chocolate produces the same effect on the body as being in love. And, like love, chocolate is essential to happiness. I have always noticed the way the waiter looks at you when you order a chocolate-heavy pudding, with a slight look of longing. As a restaurateur, maybe it'd be a good idea to feed the troops some chocolate before the battle that is a restaurant service begins. Your team should have rations of the stuff, a kindness to staff and customers alike.

The worst chocolate news I have ever had is that Cadbury may be planning to change the recipe of the mighty “fner” (as devotees such as my family like to call the sacred Fruit & Nut). What does this mean? Fewer nuts, or raisins, or both? This would be dabbling in a fine balance that goes back as far as chocolate itself, so excuse me if I abuse the privilege of this column to issue a word of warning to Cadbury: don't mess with the fner. Pay heed to what I say – do not attempt to meddle with the equilibrium of the universe.

It runs deep. I find it interesting that both single-estate chocolate such as the example we use for our ice-cream, and the humble Fruit & Nut both require such a very fine sense of balance. Further proof of the mystery and romance that is chocolate. ●



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jane Duncan, tourism officer and current student of Le Cordon Bleu Master of Gastronomic Tourism.

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EAT OUT



Hottest chocolate desserts

Whether played off cherries, berries and citrus on the one hand, or wattleseed, soy flour, and sesame on the other, chocolate still rocks dessert. Introducing 14 of Australia's best.

Many's the chocolate fan who would say their substance of choice is something best savoured as simply as possible (and there's a hardcore to that group who would likely add "preferably alone" to that picture). Then there are those of us who are content to get our fix any way we can take it, or – better still – thrill to the wonders our country's most talented chefs can work with chocolate, spinning it into remarkable new forms. Happily, the only correct response to offer here is "we'll take one of each". And, no, we won't be sharing.

Wattleseed custard with Daintree chocolate, GOMA

This clever wattleseed custard dessert evokes the outback and almost looks painterly enough to share gallery space with Rover Thomas's *Barramundi Dreaming*. Originally conceived for a dégustation celebrating the Brisbane Gallery of Modern Art's Harvest: Art, Film + Food exhibition, it has become a regular feature on Instagram and the menus of its creator, GOMA chef Josue Lopez. It was also the grand finale of a banquet at the 2014 G20 summit. A pristine double strip of white dots made from creamy Daintree vanilla curd embellishes a matte burnt umber skin created by carefully spray-painting a mix of cocoa butter and 70 per cent dark Daintree Estates chocolate over a subtly coffee-flavoured, wattleseed-flecked custard. The result presents as a deliciously edible tribute to dot painting. *GOMA Restaurant, Gallery of Modern Art, Stanley Pl, South Bank, Qld, (07) 3842 9916, qagoma.qld.gov.au*

Chocolate and liquorice tart, Ester

There's plenty of colour at Ester, but two of its desserts are marvels of the monochrome. The first, a one-two punch of young-coconut sorbet and unpasteurised sake, contains no chocolate, so we will speak of it here no more. But the second fits our theme nicely. To make it, chef Mat Lindsay blind-bakes a tart shell of chocolate shortcrust, darkened further with the addition of vegetable ash. Meanwhile, he prepares a

water-based ganache of boiled soft liquorice, whipping it with 58 per cent milk and 72 per cent dark chocolate. It's poured over the pastry and left to set before being plated with crème fraîche and a dusting of chocolate sherbet. "Simple but effective," says Lindsay. *Ester, 46/52 Meagher St, Chippendale, NSW, (02) 8068 8279, ester-restaurant.com.au*

Warm chocolate fondant, Me Wah

A Cantonese restaurant may seem an unlikely place to find Hobart's best chocolate dessert, but Me Wah has Hobart's most interesting dessert list, full-stop. And while chocolate fondant may sound ho-hum, this version is good enough to bring it into favour. Cooked and served in a broad white cup, the dark, almost savoury fondant oozes in a gratifying way when its fine crust is pierced. You could do that with a spoon but the shard of cardamom caramel served on the side does a fine job. There are other condiments to add to the mix as well.

The fondant is hot enough to gently melt the taro-coconut ice-cream, and some biscuity crumbs of almond bricelet (traditionally a fine waffle made in western Switzerland and served with coffee) add a nice crunch. The cup itself is an inspired choice. It contains the oozing chocolate, making it easy to mix and match the condiments, and its shape makes it easy to get to every last morsel. The recommended match of a glass of Equipo Navazos Pedro Ximénez is spot-on, too. *Me Wah, 16 Magnet Court, Sandy Bay Rd, Tas, (03) 6223 3688, mewah.com.au*



HAPPY ENDINGS

Above: Me Wah's fondant. Left: chocolate and liquorice tart at Ester. Opposite: GOMA's wattleseed custard with Daintree chocolate.

PLEASURE ZONE

Lûmé's chocolate mousse eggs, and (right) the lamington at Bennelong. Below: Cafe Di Stasio's vanilla torta and (below right) Montrachet's chocolat de passion.

Chocolate mousse eggs with lemon marmalade, Lûmé

The most Instagrammed dish at Lûmé is surely its cerebral showpiece chocolate dessert: a cacao pod made from chocolate that's smashed open at the table, revealing multicoloured elements that reflect the chocolate's flavour profile. But despite being less immediately showy, the chocolate eggs from the bar menu might just nudge ahead in terms of pleasure. Tempered Cluizel chocolate is poured into egg moulds and then filled with a gorgeously textured chocolate mousse made with more Cluizel and a vanilla-spiked crema Catalan ganache. The eggs are teamed with a slightly salty Meyer lemon marmalade and seasonal fruit, fresh blood plums, perhaps, or apples compressed in an absinthe syrup. The fruity supporting cast is fine and considered but it's the simple pleasure of those eggs, shiny and perfect and satisfying to break open to reveal the mousse inside, that really fixes this chocolate dessert on the radar. *Lûmé, 226 Coventry St, South Melbourne, Vic, (03) 9690 0185, restaurantlume.com*

Cherry jam lamington, Bennelong

It all starts with a good sponge, says Peter Gilmore. It's layered with a jam made from preserved cherries, coconut cream, cherry ice-cream, chocolate ganache, all moulded together, then coated in a chocolate mirror glaze. Instead of using desiccated coconut, he makes a coconut parfait, shaving it into liquid nitrogen, scattering the resulting evanescent wisps around the cake. "It's a dessert we can claim as our own... it has heritage but continues to evolve." *Bennelong, Sydney Opera House, Bennelong Point, Sydney, NSW, (02) 9240 8000, sydneyoperahouse.com*

Goma Street, Kiyomi

With wafer-thin discs of perfectly tempered 62 per cent Satilia Valrhona chocolate forming the structural basis for a lightly caramelised white-chocolate mousse studded with candied sesame praline, this looks like an adults-only dessert, not least when it's paired with a lilac-hued ball of black-sesame ice-cream.

But the clue to Goma Street's true appeal lies in its name: "goma" is Japanese for sesame, a nod to the home of TV's Big Bird, Bert and Ernie. "We stack it up straight so you can smash it with your spoon and feel the crack of the chocolate to get that wow factor," says chef Chase Kojima. "It makes you feel like a kid again." The mousse filling offers a toasty, lightly nutty complement to the earthiness of the black and white sesame, and the bittersweet almond and roasted notes of the Satilia. And, as befits a pud doffing its cap to our greedy inner child, there's not even a hint of fruit. It's all about textured, mouth-filling, nutty, chocolate richness. *Kiyomi, Jupiters Hotel, Casino Dr, Broadbeach Island, Broadbeach, Qld, (07) 5592 8100, jupitersgoldcoast.com.au*



White chocolate and mascarpone tart, *Café Di Stasio*

Though many serious chocolate folk recoil, hissing, at white chocolate, when it's treated with a firm hand, it deserves a small but legitimate space on any dessert repertoire. Take the torta di vaniglia at Café Di Stasio. It arrives pale and beautiful, the short, short pastry filled with a smooth mixture of mascarpone, white chocolate, star anise, orange and roasted Sicilian pistachio nuts, a combination that teeters thrillingly between sweet and oversweet without ever toppling over. The filling is topped by texture – roughly chopped white chocolate pieces and more pistachio – all softened by a blizzard of icing sugar. The subtle citrus and spice notes, plus the texture, make the torta interesting, as well as pretty and sweet. It's made to pair with something herbal, slightly bitter and super-strong. Or Champagne. *Café Di Stasio, 31 Fitzroy St, St Kilda, Vic, (03) 9525 3999, distasio.com.au*

Chocolate soufflé, *Grossi Florentino*

The Florentino chocolate soufflé is Melbourne dessert royalty. It was on the menu before the Grossi family took over at the turn of the century and nobody can pinpoint when it first appeared before then. Unsurprisingly, any attempts to change the flavour of the soufflé have been met with fierce resistance. It's not revered merely for sentimental reasons, either; it's a classic of the genre, simultaneously light and rich, made with dark Callebaut cocoa, served in a copper pot and teamed with hazelnut praline and a chocolate sauce flavoured with Valrhona

SWEET SUCCESS

Chocolate soufflé at Grossi Florentino. Below: Pei Modern's milk-chocolate sorbet.



dark chocolate. The only real change has come with the accompanying ice-cream. Once upon a time it was malt, but now it's vanilla flavoured with grains of paradise, giving it a slightly peppery, spicy, chilli-citrus kick that adds a satisfying level of complexity. *Grossi Florentino, 80 Bourke St, Melbourne, Vic, (03) 9662 1811, grossiflorentino.com*

Milk chocolate sorbet, orange jam and Anzac biscuit, *Pei Modern*

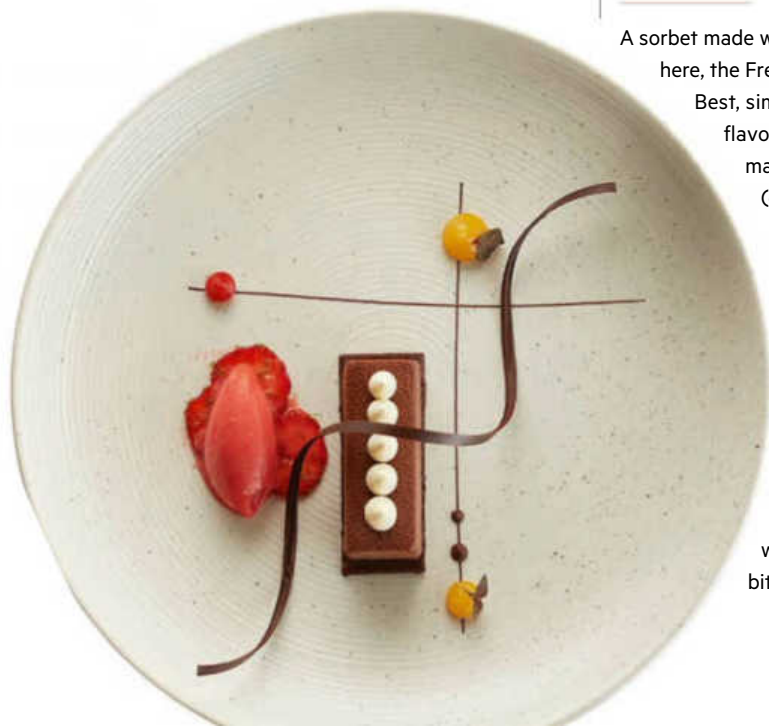
A sorbet made with Valrhona is the centrepiece here, the French brand selected, says Mark Best, simply for its rich chocolate flavour. It's complemented by a marmalade made with oranges (or blood oranges in season) set with their own pectin, and an Anzac biscuit. "We also put gold leaf on the chocolate because the punters like things that glitter," Best says. "The crunch of the biscuit is just a good match, texturally, and the marriage of the chocolate and orange is classic. We wood-roast whole oranges to make a bitter-orange powder to dust



it with. It's yin and yang – gilding the lily with the gold, then undercutting that with the bitterness." *Pei Modern, Four Seasons Hotel Sydney, 199 George St, Sydney, NSW, (02) 9250 3160, peimodern.com.au*

Chocolat de passion, *Montrachet*

For those occasions when too much isn't nearly enough, we turn to chocolat de passion. This miniature gâteau, precisely spray-painted in 64 per cent Valrhona Manjari, is a paean to classical pâtisserie skills. Since Shannon Kellam took over at Montrachet last April, the dessert has become its hottest seller: between 100 and 150 depart the kitchen weekly – no mean feat when preparation takes between three and four hours. The base is a sliver of Manjari hazelnut praline, topped by a layer of Manjari hazelnut mousse, tart passionfruit crémeux and a Grand Marnier-soaked joconde sponge. This is followed by a layer of orange jelly topped with Grand Marnier brûlée. The bar is blast-frozen and >





sprayed to order. When it hits the table, it's finished with a ribbon of tempered Manjari and a quenelle of sorbet made from overripe strawberries. Each plate is dotted with strawberry and passionfruit purée with a single hand-drawn line of tempered Manjari. "A dessert should make you feel uplifted and happy. It's the last thing a customer has, so it should seal the deal," Kellam says. OTT and then some. *Montrachet, 224 Given Tce, Paddington, Qld, (07) 3367 0030, montrachet.com.au*

Chocolate sorbet with black kinako milk gelée, *Wasabi*

This confection uses innovation, textural variety and pastry craft in place of heavy fats and masses of sugar to grab diners by their shirtfronts. At heart it's a rejig of the classic booze-coffee-chocolate dessert combo, says head chef Zeb Gilbert, with small cubes of milk jelly infused with roasted black soybean flour (aka kinako) standing in for the coffee element. A thick gel made from rare aged Ogasawara mirin, a mellow artisan drinking mirin from Japan's Aichi prefecture, adds complexity. Freeze-dried cherry and cherry cheeks dressed in a light syrup made from mirin, sake and the cherry pits bring freshness, and the bitterness of organic cacao nibs offset the



sweetness of a punchy sorbet made from Lindt couverture and Dutch cocoa. It's all topped off with black and cream shards of crisp tuile and cacao snaps, plated with a dark-chocolate sablé soil and chocolate meringue. It's thoughtful, detailed and different – pure chocolate-eating pleasure. *Wasabi, 2 Quamby Pl, Noosa, Qld, (07) 5449 2443, wasabisb.com*

Set chocolate, chestnut cream, blackberries, *The Bridge Room*

There are two secret weapons in Ross Lusted's armoury for this dish. The first is the particular brand of chocolate. It's a professional-grade concentrate from Valrhona called P125, which Lusted has chosen for its low fat content. "It's only 36 per cent fat, which is low for a dense chocolate, and it's 80 per cent cocoa and just 19 per cent sugar, so it has a strong flavour but

doesn't leave your mouth coated with fat." Lusted whips the melted chocolate into a mousse, folds in chestnut and cream to make a base and teams it with a syrup made with seasonal fruit – here cherries and blackberries. And the other secret ingredient? Burnt bread. "We char Sonoma miche in our robata grill until it's good and black," he says. "It ends up with malty tones similar to the chestnut, and gives it a nice texture and depth of flavour." *The Bridge Room, 44 Bridge St, Sydney, NSW, (02) 9247 7000, thebridgeroom.com.au*

Tipomisu, *Tipo 00*

Variations on tiramisù are infinite and in some ways Tipo 00's take on the classic Italian dessert could be considered another. But, as the name suggests, this is more "inspired by" than "tribute to", with the Tipomisu going into fancier, more theatrical territory than the boozy and coffee-soaked original. Tipo's version starts with a dense chocolate brownie hollowed out and filled with mascarpone, cream, yolk, dark rum and sugar. The brownie is capped with a disc of tempered dark chocolate and taken to the table. Once there, a hot sauce made with caramel, espresso, dark chocolate and salt is poured over the chocolate lid, melting it and making the whole thing a kind of self-saucing pudding/Euro mash-up. The most surprising thing, given all that rich chocolate action, is it's not too sweet – the one way it cleaves to Italian dessert tradition. *Tipo 00, 361 Lt Bourke St, Melbourne, Vic, (03) 9942 3946, tipo00.com.au*

Valrhona chocolate after-dinner mints, *Rockpool Bar & Grill*

There's no shortage of walloping chocolate things to tempt the cacao-inclined at Rockpool, not least the chocolate fondant choux with honeycomb and rum. (Let that sink in for a moment: honeycomb and rum.) But for those of us who retain fond memories of dinner parties in the '70s and '80s (or want to cultivate a little fresh nostalgia), there's just no going past the after-dinner mints on the petits-fours menu. Throw in truffles and dark-chocolate bark, and you've more than enough excuse to linger longer. *Rockpool Bar & Grill, 66 Hunter St, Sydney, NSW, (02) 8078 1900, rockpool.com* ●

CHOC OF THE NEW

Tipo 00's Tipomisu. Left: The Bridge Room's set chocolate, and (below left) Rockpool Bar & Grill's take on after-dinner mints.

More “inspired by” than “tribute to”, the Tipomisu goes into fancier, more theatrical territory than the *booze and coffee-soaked* original.



A man OF INFLUENCE



A tribute to Max Schubert

Penfolds celebrates Max Schubert with a new range, the first Penfolds wines named after a winemaker and a mark of the esteem in which he is held by the winery and fellow winemakers alike. Penfolds' chief winemaker for 37 years, he is best known for creating Australia's flagship red wine, Penfolds Grange. He also pioneered the Penfolds Bin wines, starting with Kalimna Bin 28 Shiraz in 1959. A master of the art of multiregional blending, Max nurtured the spirit of innovation, which continues at the winery to this day, and the Penfolds winemakers and viticulturists today are proud custodians of his legacy, celebrated with this landmark commemorative range.

Honour roll

Max Schubert joined Penfolds in 1931 as a messenger boy, becoming chief winemaker by 1948. He won many honours for his work including Member of the Order of Australia, the inaugural Maurice O'Shea Award for his contribution to the Australian wine industry, and in 1988 he was named Man of the Year by *Decanter* magazine.

Penfolds

MAD ABOUT

Max

Penfolds unveils a new range of exceptional wines to celebrate the enduring legacy of legendary winemaker Max Schubert.

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gifted

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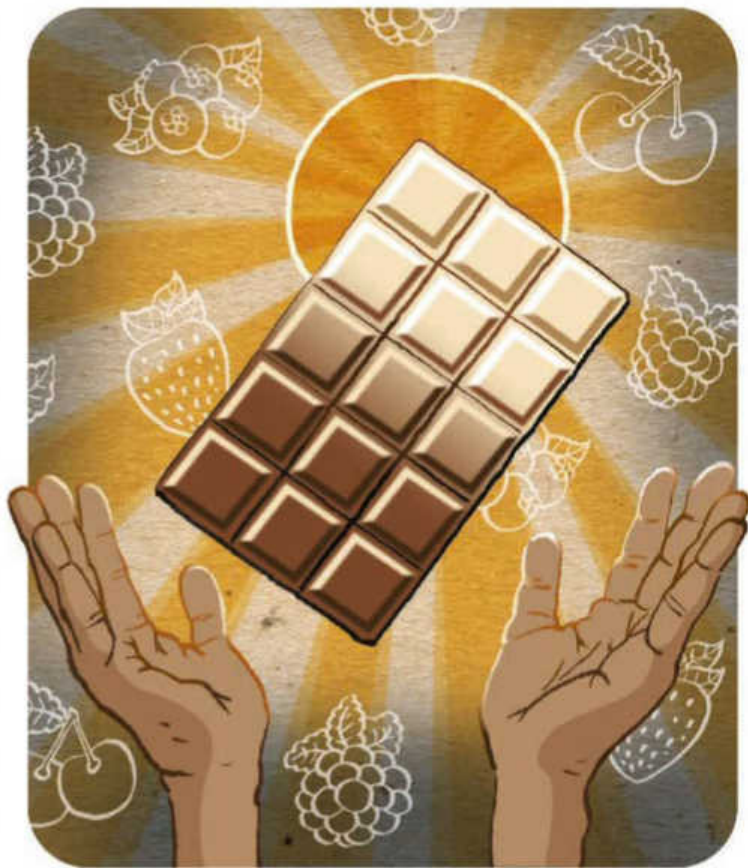
tribute

Inspired by the spirit of innovation and progress Max instilled in Penfolds, these plush and approachable wines reflect the generosity of spirit that is part of his lasting heritage.

Max's Shiraz, a rich and immediately appealing wine, and Shiraz Cabernet, youthful yet ready to drink now. RRP \$34.99



True to its name, Max's The Promise Shiraz ensures rich rewards, available in luxe packaging tailor-made for occasions such as Father's Day, Christmas and Chinese New Year. RRP \$49.99



Is cocoa the go?

In defence of white chocolate: **Annabel Crabb** makes the case for the controversial confectionery.

White chocolate. It's always been the poor cousin of the chocolate family. Dark chocolate – with its hardcore fans intently monitoring cocoa-solid content as it rockets through 70, 80 and 90 per cent towards its ultimate bitter target of 100 – is the rock star.

It's bloody hard to offend anyone with dark chocolate. You can use it unimpeachably of course, in countless desserts. You can put it in savoury dishes. You can even eat it and remain smug about your dietary health, like those Paleo types and sugar-dodgers. (Indeed, every month or two someone releases a study concluding that dark chocolate is good for fending off Alzheimer's, or maintaining gum health, or some other health benefit.)

There is, in other words, widespread general support for the smug caste system of chocolate, in which the higher the percentage of cocoa solids in any given bar, the more prestige it accrues.

But poor old white chocolate has zero per cent cocoa solids. In the chocolate world, this makes it decidedly non-street. It is made from cocoa butter, sugar and milk solids, and, okay, that does sound sort of disgusting.

Its honky overtones, and near-endless capacity for opportunistic backfill (cheap fats, the geopolitical murk of palm oil, milk powders and sundry sugary bulking agents), make white chocolate the disreputable darling of cheesecake shops and basement-priced Easter hampers the world over.

“It's the chocolate serious people are ashamed of and its persecutors will accurately observe that 'it's not even chocolate'.”

It's the chocolate serious people are ashamed of and its persecutors will accurately observe that “it's not even chocolate”.

All of this is deeply unfair to white chocolate, which, if it were simply called something else, would be recognised more uncomplicatedly for its best self, which is a smooth and accomplished friend in the kitchen.

No, it's not going to work with your venison. And it won't appeal to those sugar-free Paleo types, but a good-quality white chocolate can nonetheless be a deep fount of joy. Relieved of the obligation to manage the grit of cocoa solids, white chocolate allows cocoa butter to step to the fore, with all its silkiness and structural opportunity. It will obediently stabilise and deepen a ganache, or wordlessly enhance a mousse.

Its texture – if you buy a decent white chocolate which has a high proportion of cocoa butter and hasn't been rendered either chalky or tooth-crackingly sweet by cheap filler – is incredibly luxurious. You can buy it in little ovoid shapes called fèves, and tiny buttons called pistoles, both of which are facts I find extremely pleasing.

My friend and co-author Wendy Sharpe once ate a dessert at J Sheekey, the legendary fish restaurant in London's West End, that inaugurated a decades-long obsession. Called something like “Scandinavian iced berries”, it was simply a dish of frozen berries over which a warm sauce of white chocolate and cream was poured at the table.

That's the trick with white chocolate. Team it with unrelenting sweetness and you wind up in a Fudgemallow nightmare of American proportions. (I trawled through a couple of websites for white chocolate recipes and was immediately assailed by White Chocolate Oreo Dippers and something called a Snickerdoodle Cookie; perhaps it is the inclusion of milk products that condemns white chocolate so readily to ghastly infantilism.)

But team it with tartness and you're onto a winner. I love white chocolate with passionfruit or sour cherries, or with its immortal soulmate, the dried apricot (as long as it's a proper, flame-orange, slightly jammy sun-dried one, and not one of those flaccid Turkish numbers).

Another way of subverting the excessive sweetness with which white chocolate is associated is to roast it, whereupon a whole new world of nuttiness opens up.

Another friend Julia makes an unforgivable brownie of dark chocolate and cocoa into which, just before baking, she shoves whole chunks of white chocolate. By the time it comes out of the oven, the brownie is harbouring hidden landmines of caramelised delight.

A ganache of roasted white chocolate is, of course, still sweet. But its rich, buttery brown hue and toasty flavour are ample rewards for a quiet declaration of faith in this much-reviled ingredient. Just forget that it's even called chocolate. You won't regret it. ●

Annabel Crabb is the host of the ABC's Kitchen Cabinet, co-author of Special Delivery (Murdoch Books) and a political commentator.

A large, round chocolate tart with a golden-brown crust sits on a dark wooden board. The tart is topped with a smooth, dark chocolate filling and several fresh blackberries. Two triangular slices have been cut out and are placed in the foreground. A silver pie server lies on the board next to the slices. Crumbs of the crust are scattered around the tart. The word "EXCESS" is written in large, white, serif capital letters across the center of the tart, with "ALL AREAS" in smaller, white, serif capital letters below it.

EXCESS

ALL AREAS

Who said you can have too much of a good thing? Not us. Welcome to our rockin' chocolate extravaganza.

RECIPES & FOOD STYLING **EMMA KNOWLES & LISA FEATHERBY**
PHOTOGRAPHY **WILLIAM MEPPEN** STYLING **CLAIRE DELMAR**

Chocolate and blackberry
tart (RECIPE P102)

BLACKBERRY TART

Round marble tray from Citta Design. Brass bowl from The DEA Store. Table from Globe West (used throughout).

COCONUT TART

Brass tray from Zakkia. Bowl in corner from Dinosaur Designs. Glassware from Becker Minty. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

Chocolate coconut tart with passionfruit and banana (RECIPE P102)



Chocolate and blackberry tart

Be sure to blind-bake the pastry until light golden so it will be crisp once the filling is cooked. Cool the tart completely before you serve it, and if it's a hot day place it in the fridge to help set the filling.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 1½ hrs

(plus resting, cooling)

Serves 8-10 (pictured p100)

- 180 gm dark chocolate (55%-60% cocoa solids)
 - 85 gm butter, diced
 - 4 eggs, separated
 - 50 gm caster sugar
 - 80 ml (⅓ cup) pouring cream, whisked to soft peaks
 - 200 gm blackberries, plus extra to serve
- Shortcrust pastry**
- 250 (1½ cups) gm plain flour
 - Scraped seeds of 1 vanilla bean
 - 150 gm chilled butter, diced
 - 1 egg

1 For shortcrust pastry, process flour, vanilla seeds and a pinch of salt in a food processor to combine, add butter and process until just combined with flecks of butter still showing. Add egg and 2 tsp cold water and pulse until combined, then turn pastry out onto a bench, knead with the palm of your hand to just bring dough together without overworking it, then wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour to rest.

2 Roll pastry between 2 sheets of Go-Between (plastic sheeting) or baking paper to a 35cm round. Remove top sheet and invert pastry into a 24cm loose-bottomed tart tin. Press pastry gently into the edges, then remove remaining sheet, trim edges and refrigerate for 30 minutes to rest.

3 Preheat oven to 175C. Blind-bake tart case until starting to turn golden (35 minutes; see cook's notes p184). Remove paper and weights,

reduce oven to 160C and bake, gently pressing pastry down with a clean tea towel if it puffs up and rotating tin so pastry cooks evenly, until golden and base is set (10-15 minutes).

4 Meanwhile, in a heatproof bowl placed over a saucepan of simmering water, melt chocolate and butter (5-7 minutes), stirring occasionally, until smooth. Cool for 5 minutes. Whisk eggwhites in an electric mixer until frothy, then gradually add sugar, whisking until soft peaks form. Whisk yolks into chocolate mixture, fold in eggwhite in batches, then fold in cream to just combine.

5 Scatter blackberries in pastry case, then pour chocolate mixture over blackberries, spreading evenly. Bake until a skewer inserted withdraws clean (20-25 minutes). Cool tart in tin on a wire rack (30-40 minutes), then remove tart ring and cool to room temperature (1-1½ hours). Serve with extra blackberries. This tart is best served on the day it's made.

Chocolate coconut tart with passionfruit and banana

Passionfruit and chocolate may seem an unusual combination, but the two are surprisingly compatible, with the passionfruit adding a fruity tang to the mix. The macaroon-style crust makes this ideal for the gluten-intolerant among us, and is delicious to boot.

Prep time 30 mins, cook 30 mins
(plus cooling, setting)

Serves 6-8 (pictured p101)

- Sliced banana, passionfruit pulp and shaved coconut, to serve
- Coconut crust**
- 110 gm (½ cup) caster sugar
 - 2 eggs, separated
 - 250 gm flaked coconut
- Whipped truffle filling**
- 200 ml pouring cream
 - 70 ml passionfruit juice (from 3-5 passionfruit; see note)
 - 220 gm dark chocolate (55%-60% cocoa solids), finely chopped
 - 3 egg yolks
 - 1 tbsp caster sugar

1 For coconut crust, preheat oven to 180C, and butter and line a 21cm-diameter springform cake tin with baking paper. Whisk sugar and yolks in an electric mixer until thick and pale (4-5 minutes). In

a separate bowl, whisk eggwhites until soft peaks form, then fold into yolk mixture along with coconut and a pinch of salt. Spoon the coconut mixture into prepared tin, spreading evenly over base and two-thirds of the way up the sides. Bake until golden (20-25 minutes), then, while still warm, press down on base to flatten. Set aside to cool.

2 For whipped truffle filling, bring cream and passionfruit juice to the boil in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Remove from heat, add chocolate, stand for 5 minutes, then whisk until smooth. Whisk yolks, sugar and 1 tbsp water in a bowl over a saucepan of simmering water until pale and fluffy (3-4 minutes), then transfer to an electric mixer, add chocolate mixture and whisk on high speed until cooled to room temperature (10-15 minutes). Pour into pastry case and refrigerate until set (4-5 hours). This tart can be made a day ahead.

3 To serve, top tart with sliced banana, passionfruit pulp and shaved coconut.

Note To extract passionfruit juice, process pulp in a food processor, then strain it through a sieve.

Choc-malt and almond brownie

This ultra-fudgy brownie is perfect on its own, but if you want to up the luxe-factor, serve it with a warm chocolate sauce (see the hot tip, right).

Prep time 20 mins, cook 1 hr (plus cooling)

Makes about 16

- 120 gm raw almonds
- 250 gm butter, coarsely chopped
- 250 gm dark chocolate (60%-68% cocoa solids), coarsely chopped
- 270 gm brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- 170 gm plain flour
- 40 gm Dutch-process cocoa
- ¼ tsp baking powder
- 60 gm malted milk powder
- 150 gm milk chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 50 gm cacao nibs

1 Preheat oven to 180C, and butter and line a 22cm-square cake tin with baking paper, allowing paper to overhang sides. Spread almonds on a baking tray and roast until golden brown and fragrant (6-7 minutes). Cool, then coarsely chop.

2 Melt butter and dark chocolate in a bowl over a saucepan of simmering water, stirring occasionally, until smooth (2-3 minutes). Remove from heat, add sugar, then mix in eggs one at a time. Sieve flour, cocoa and baking powder over mixture, add malt powder and a pinch of salt and stir to combine (don't overwork the dough or the brownie will become cakey), then stir in almonds, milk chocolate and cacao nibs, reserving a little of each to scatter on top.

3 Spread batter in prepared tin, scatter with reserved almonds, chocolate and cacao nibs and bake until set around the edges but still a little fudgy in the centre (45-50 minutes; a skewer inserted should withdraw with just a little mixture on it). Cool completely, then cut into pieces and store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.>



Choc-malt and almond brownie

HOT TIP

For a simple chocolate sauce to serve with these brownies, bring 300ml of pouring cream to a simmer in a pan over medium-high heat, then remove from heat, add 200gm of finely chopped dark chocolate (56% cocoa solids), and stand for 5 minutes. Whisk until smooth and serve warm.



BROWNIE Robert Gordon
Australia Glow side plate
in gold and Host copper
cake forks from Domayne.
Linen napkin from Stone.
Tom Dixon milk jug from
Macleay on Manning.
All other props stylist's
own. Stockists p183.
TEXT PAGE All props
stylist's own.

MILKSHAKE & COOKIES

Tom Dixon glassware from De De Ce. Plate from Becker Minty. **ROULADE** Marble platter from Citta Design. Bowl from Becker Minty. Spoon from The DEA Store. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

Super-choc milkshake



Salted oat and chocolate cookies

Super-choc milkshake

**Prep time 15 mins, cook 5 mins
(plus standing, cooling)**

Makes 4

- 1 litre (4 cups) chilled milk
- 12 scoops chocolate ice-cream
- Whipped cream (optional) and shaved chocolate, to serve

Chocolate syrup

- 165 gm (1 cup) caster sugar
- 170 gm dark chocolate (55%-60% cocoa solids), finely chopped

1 For chocolate syrup, stir sugar and 80ml water in a saucepan over medium-high heat until sugar dissolves. Brush down sides of pan with a wet pastry brush to remove sugar crystals, bring to the boil and cook without stirring until dark caramel (3-4 minutes). Remove from heat, add 400ml water (be careful, hot caramel will spit) and chocolate and stand for 5 minutes. Whisk until smooth, then transfer to a container and refrigerate until required. Bring to room temperature before using. Chocolate syrup will keep for 2 weeks.

2 Pour a little chocolate syrup into 4 tall chilled serving glasses and refrigerate while you make the shakes. Blend milk, two-thirds of the ice-cream and chocolate syrup to taste in a blender until frothy, then pour into chilled glasses. Add a scoop of ice-cream to each glass, top with whipped cream and shaved chocolate and serve.

Salted oat and chocolate cookies

Bitter chocolate and a good pinch of salt in these chewy oat biscuits bring a savoury counterpoint to the milk chocolate filling. If you prefer a less chewy texture, bake them for a little longer. The biscuits and filling will keep separately for up to a week, but it's best to fill them on the day you want to eat them.

**Prep time 30 mins, cook 20 mins
(plus cooling)**

Makes 10-12

- 170 gm butter, melted and cooled
- 220 gm (1 cup) brown sugar
- 110 gm (½ cup) caster sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 egg
- 1 egg yolk
- 300 gm (2 cups) plain flour
- 120 gm rolled oats
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 200 gm chocolate (70% cocoa solids), coarsely chopped
- Milk-chocolate ganache**
- 110 gm (½ cup) caster sugar
- ½ tsp lemon juice
- 200 ml pouring cream
- 400 gm milk chocolate, finely chopped

1 For milk-chocolate ganache, stir sugar, lemon juice and 40ml water in a saucepan over medium-high heat until sugar dissolves. Brush down sides of pan with a wet pastry brush to remove sugar crystals, bring to the boil and cook without stirring but swirling pan occasionally

until a dark caramel forms (3-4 minutes). Remove from heat, add cream (be careful, mixture will spit), and stir to combine. Add chocolate, return to heat and stir continuously until smooth. Refrigerate until firm.

2 Preheat oven to 180C. Beat melted butter, sugars and vanilla in a bowl until well combined (2-3 minutes). Add egg and yolk and beat until pale and creamy. Stir in flour, oats, baking powder and 1 tsp sea salt flakes, then stir in chocolate. Spoon heaped tablespoonfuls of mixture onto oven trays lined with baking paper, leaving about 5cm between each to allow for spreading. Flatten slightly, scatter with a little extra salt, then bake until edges are golden (6-8 minutes). Cool completely on trays, then store in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

3 Soften ganache briefly at room temperature, then spread thickly over half the biscuits. Sandwich with remaining biscuits and serve.



Black Forest chocolate roulade

Black Forest chocolate roulade

Sour cherries add a lovely fresh tart note to this roulade. Fresh cherries will work here, too, if you can find them, and make a sugar syrup in place of the jarred syrup used here. This roulade is adapted from a recipe by food writer Gretta Anna Teplitzky.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 45 mins

Serves 8

- 200 ml thickened cream
- 200 gm crème fraîche
- 40 gm (¼ cup) pure icing sugar
- Dutch-process cocoa, for dusting
- Sour-cherry syrup**
- 680 gm (1 jar) sour cherries in syrup, drained, syrup reserved
- 80 gm caster sugar
- Roulade sponge**
- 200 gm dark chocolate (60%-68% cocoa solids)
- 6 eggs, separated
- 300 gm caster sugar

MORE ONLINE



Check out our top 30 most-clicked-on chocolate recipes of the past decade on our website, plus top tips for white chocolate: gourmettraveller.com.au

A chocolate jelly offers a *novel change of pace* from traditional baked desserts.

Chocolate jelly

1 For sour-cherry syrup, combine cherry syrup and sugar in a saucepan over high heat, stir to dissolve sugar, then bring to the boil and cook until syrup coats the spoon (10-15 minutes). Set aside to cool, then refrigerate until chilled (1 hour).

2 For roulade sponge, preheat oven to 190C and butter and line a 20cm x 30cm Swiss roll pan with baking paper. Melt chocolate and 80ml water in a heatproof bowl over a saucepan of simmering water, stirring occasionally until smooth. Meanwhile, whisk yolks and sugar in an electric mixer until pale and creamy, and whisk eggwhites in a separate bowl until soft peaks form. Fold chocolate mixture into yolk mixture, then fold in eggwhite in batches. Spread batter gently in prepared baking tray and bake until a skewer withdraws clean (25-30 minutes). Remove from oven, cover with a slightly damp tea towel for 5 minutes, then refrigerate in tray placed on a wire rack until cool (20-30 minutes).

3 Dust cocoa over a large sheet of baking paper placed on 2 overlapping larger pieces of plastic wrap. Invert cake onto cocoa powder, remove tray and peel off baking paper. Spoon three-quarters of the cherries over sponge and combine remaining with some of the cherry syrup to serve on the side (any remaining syrup can be reserved for another use, such as drizzling over fruit salads and ice-cream).

4 Whisk cream, crème fraîche and icing sugar in a bowl to firm peaks, then spread it over the cherries and sponge, leaving a 1cm border. Rolling away from you, and using the plastic wrap to lift and roll over, wrap the roulade until into a log shape (you may need someone to help you hold it in place as you roll; the sponge is delicate and will crack a little but firms up in the fridge), then gently twist the ends of the plastic wrap to secure. Refrigerate roulade on a plastic tray until well chilled and firm (1-2 hours). Dust generously with cocoa, cut into thick slices and serve with extra cherries in syrup. This roulade is best served on the day it's made.

Chocolate jelly

Serve biscuits such as shortbread to add texture to the silky jelly. Roasted hazelnuts or walnuts work well, too.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 5 mins (plus overnight setting)

Serves 10-12

Crème fraîche and biscuits, to serve

Bitter chocolate jelly

280 gm caster sugar

2 tbsp espresso-strength coffee

400 gm chocolate (70% cocoa solids), finely chopped

9 titanium-strength gelatine leaves, softened in cold water for 5 minutes

White chocolate jelly

500 ml (2 cups) milk

300 gm couverture white chocolate, finely chopped

4 titanium-strength gelatine leaves, softened in cold water for 5 minutes

250 gm crème fraîche or sour cream

1 For bitter chocolate jelly, stir sugar, coffee and 1 litre water in a large saucepan over medium-high heat until sugar dissolves, then bring to the boil. Remove from heat, add chocolate, stand for 5 minutes, then whisk until smooth. Squeeze excess water from gelatine, add to chocolate mixture, stir until combined, then set aside to cool slightly, whisking occasionally. Pour into a 2.25-litre fluted mould and refrigerate until set (4-5 hours).

2 For white chocolate jelly, bring milk to a simmer in a saucepan over medium-high heat, then remove from heat, add chocolate, stand for 5 minutes, then whisk until smooth. Squeeze excess water from gelatine and stir into add to chocolate mixture. Gradually whisk in crème fraîche, cool briefly, then pour onto bitter chocolate jelly in mould and refrigerate until set (3-4 hours).

3 Dip mould in a saucepan of hot water, pull jelly gently away from sides to break the vacuum, place a serving plate on top, invert mould and plate, then remove mould. Serve with biscuits and crème fraîche. Jelly can be made 2 days ahead.

50 gm pure icing sugar, sieved

Scraped seeds of 1 vanilla bean

120 gm raspberries, plus extra to serve

3 tsp balsamic vinegar

1 Preheat oven to 120C. Trace a 25cm x 12cm rectangle on each of 3 sheets of baking paper, then place each sheet pencil-side down on a lightly greased baking tray. Melt chocolate in a bowl over a saucepan of simmering water, stirring occasionally until smooth. Set aside.

2 Whisk eggwhite, caster sugar and a pinch of salt in an electric mixer until firm, glossy peaks form (6-7 minutes). Sieve icing sugar, cocoa and cornflour onto mixture and fold to combine. Fold in melted chocolate to create a ripple effect, then divide evenly among prepared trays, spreading within the rectangle templates. Bake, swapping and turning trays occasionally, until crisp and dry (1-1½ hours). Turn off oven and leave meringue in to cool completely, then store in airtight containers for up to 2 days until required.

3 Meanwhile, for chocolate sauce, melt chocolate and butter in a heatproof bowl placed over a saucepan of simmering water, stirring occasionally until smooth (2-3 minutes). Combine remaining ingredients and 100ml water in a saucepan and bring to the boil, stir in chocolate mixture. Bring back to the boil, season with a good pinch of sea salt flakes and refrigerate to chill. Chocolate sauce can be made up to a week ahead.

4 For crushed raspberry cream, whisk cream, crème fraîche, icing sugar and vanilla seeds in a bowl to soft peaks. Crush raspberries with balsamic vinegar in a separate bowl and fold into cream mixture to form a ripple effect.

5 To serve, place a meringue rectangle on a serving platter, spread with a third of the crushed raspberry cream, top with a third of the raspberries, then with another meringue rectangle. Repeat layering, finishing with raspberries, then drizzle with chocolate sauce, scatter with shaved chocolate and serve.>

Chocolate raspberry meringue cake

Prep time 40 mins, cook 1½ hrs (plus cooling)

Serves 10-12 (pictured p108)

120 gm dark chocolate (56%-60% cocoa solids), finely chopped, plus extra shaved to serve

250 gm eggwhites (from about 8 eggs)

250 gm caster sugar

250 gm pure icing sugar

50 gm Dutch-process cocoa

3 tsp cornflour

Chocolate sauce

65 gm dark chocolate (58% cocoa solids), coarsely chopped

10 gm unsalted butter

75 gm (½ cup) caster sugar

70 gm liquid glucose

2 tsp Dutch-process cocoa powder, sieved

100 ml pouring cream

Crushed raspberry cream

400 ml thickened cream

400 gm crème fraîche

JELLY Tom Dixon cake stand, spoon, brass bowl and jug from De De Ce. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

SOMETHING TO DRINK?

Wine and chocolate. Sounds like a match made in heaven doesn't it? After all, by themselves wine and chocolate are two of the most delicious things we can put in our mouths. But thanks to chocolate's tongue-coating qualities and its flavour intensity, combining it with wine can be problematic – especially if the chocolate in question is part of a recipe that includes other sweet ingredients.

The key to a harmonious match is to choose a wine that has enough sweetness to balance the sugar in the recipe – but also enough power and grunt to cope with the big dark flavours of the chocolate. This is why fortified wine in all its forms is a great option: a luscious Rutherglen muscat, perhaps, or an intensely spicy tawny Port, or a treacly black Pedro Ximénez sherry from Spain or sweet Marsala from Sicily. These are the wines I reach for when anything chocolatey is on the table in front of me.

Having said that, there are good non-wine options, too. The pleasant bitterness and alcohol sweetness found in dark, strong beers such as imperial stout can work really well with dark chocolate dishes, as can the generous flavours and power of good whisky, rum or brandy – indeed, spirits are arguably the best match of all for chocolate eaten on its own, especially with the very high-cocoa-content bittersweet stuff. MAX ALLEN

MERINGUE CAKE

All props stylist's own.

CHOC TOPS Marble tray from Citta Design. Tom Dixon brass bowl from De De Ce. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.



Chocolate raspberry
meringue cake (RECIPE P107)



Choc-raisin choc tops
(RECIPE P110)



Chocolate
honeycomb

Chocolate honeycomb

This is great dipped in extra chocolate, or crumbled over ice-cream. When you cook the mixture, it's really important to keep stirring when it's getting close to the right temperature lest the cocoa burn, and you'll need an accurate sugar thermometer. This honeycomb stores well in an airtight container in the freezer. Humidity makes this sweet treat sticky so it's best made on a cool, dry day.

Prep time 10 mins, cook 15 mins (plus cooling)

Serves 6-8

- 8 gm (1 heaped tsp) bicarbonate of soda
- 165 gm caster sugar
- 60 gm liquid glucose
- 60 gm honey
- 8 gm (1 heaped tsp) Dutch-process cocoa, sieved
- Melted dark chocolate (60%-68% cocoa solids), to serve

- 1** Sieve bicarbonate of soda into a bowl and set aside. Line a deep-sided 15cm x 20cm metal tray with baking paper and set aside.
- 2** Bring sugar, glucose, honey, cocoa and 60ml water to the boil, stirring to dissolve sugar, then boil, swirling pan occasionally at first and stirring occasionally towards the end of cooking to prevent burning on the base, until mixture reaches 150C on a sugar thermometer (8-12 minutes; hard crack stage). Sprinkle with bicarbonate of soda (be careful, hot mixture will puff up), swirl pan quickly

to combine and immediately pour into prepared tray, then stand without touching until cooled (10-15 minutes). Break into pieces and dip in chocolate, cooling in fridge to set. Honeycomb is best on the day it's made, but freezes well.

Choc-raisin choc tops

Coat the insides of the ice-cream cones with melted chocolate if you want to up the ante.

Prep time 45 mins, cook 20 mins (plus cooling, freezing)

Makes 10-12 (pictured p109)

- Ice-cream cones, to serve
- Melted dark chocolate, for coating
- Choc-raisin ice-cream**
- 600 ml pouring cream
- 200 ml milk
- 150 ml muscat or Pedro Ximénez
- 6 egg yolks
- 100 gm caster sugar
- 500 gm dark chocolate (55% cocoa solids), finely chopped
- 150 gm raisins or dried muscatels
- Choc-top coating**
- 200 gm dark chocolate (55% cocoa solids), finely chopped
- 2 tbs vegetable oil or coconut oil

- 1** For choc-raisin ice-cream, bring cream, milk and 50ml muscat just to a simmer over medium-high

heat. Whisk yolks and sugar in a bowl until pale (5-6 minutes), then, whisking continuously, pour in cream mixture. Return to pan and stir over medium heat until mixture thickly coats the back of a spoon (4-5 minutes). Remove from heat, add chocolate, whisk until smooth, then strain into a bowl and cooled briefly, whisking occasionally. Refrigerate to chill completely. Meanwhile, simmer raisins and remaining muscat in a small saucepan over medium-high heat until all liquid is absorbed (10-12 minutes). Cool. Churn chocolate mixture in an ice-cream machine, adding raisins towards the end, then freeze. Makes about 1.5 litres.

2 Coat the insides of the ice-cream cones with melted chocolate, tipping out excess, and refrigerate until set.

3 For choc-top coating, melt chocolate in a bowl over a saucepan of simmering water, stirring occasionally until smooth, then stir in oil.

4 Scoop ice-cream into cones, then dip in topping, shaking off excess. Place on trays lined with baking paper and freeze until set. Freeze in an airtight container until required. Choc tops will keep for 2 weeks.

Chocolate and roasted almond semifreddo

If you don't have an ice-cream maker this is an easy, rich and velvety alternative. Be sure to toast the almonds thoroughly – their nuttiness is a wonderful contrast to the rich chocolate cream. Start this recipe a day ahead.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 14 mins (plus cooling, freezing)

Serves 8

- 125 gm blanched almonds
- 5 eggs
- 100 gm caster sugar
- 300 ml milk
- ½ vanilla bean, split and seeds scraped
- 280 gm dark chocolate (60%-68% cocoa solids), finely chopped
- 200 ml thickened cream

- 1** Preheat oven to 190C, and butter and line base and sides of an 8cm x 8cm x 23cm loaf tin with plastic wrap, leaving some overhang.
- 2** Roast almonds on an oven tray until golden (10-14 minutes). Cool, then coarsely chop.
- 3** Whisk eggs and sugar in a heatproof bowl until pale. Meanwhile, bring milk and vanilla bean and seeds just to the boil in a saucepan over high heat. Add to egg mixture, whisking continuously until combined, return to saucepan and stir continuously over medium heat until mixture thickly coats the spoon (3-4 minutes). Remove from heat, add chocolate and stand for 2 minutes to melt, then stir until smooth. Transfer to a bowl placed over iced water to cool (20-25 minutes).
- 4** Whisk cream in a bowl until soft peaks form, then gently fold into chocolate mixture in 3 batches. Fold in almonds, pour into prepared mould, cover with overhanging plastic wrap and freeze until firm (6 hours or overnight). Serve thickly sliced. Semifreddo is best eaten the same week it's made.>

HONEYCOMB Copper charger plate from Williams-Sonoma. Dinner Plate from The DEA Store.

SEMIFREDDO Ink trivets from Zakkia. Glass from Becker Minty. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

Chocolate and roasted almond semifreddo

**HOT
TIP**

Semifreddo is a fuss-free dessert with luxe appeal. For easy entertaining, it can be sliced and portioned ahead of time and reserved in the freezer ready to go.

A great flourless chocolate cake is *essential* to any baking repertoire.

Flourless chocolate,
hazelnut and buttermilk
cake (RECIPE P114)

CAKE All props stylist's own. **BRIOCHE** Tom Dixon marble oval platter from De De Ce. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.



Chocolate brioche (RECIPE P114)

Flourless chocolate, hazelnut and buttermilk cake

A great flourless chocolate cake is essential to any baking repertoire. This one is super-moist yet holds well for a long time. It's important to cool it completely before it's served, or it may crumble as it's sliced.

Prep time 15 mins, cook 40 mins (plus cooling)

Serves 8-10 (pictured p112)

- 170 gm hazelnuts
- 280 gm dark chocolate (66-70% cocoa solids), coarsely chopped
- 100 gm butter, coarsely chopped
- 100 ml well-shaken buttermilk at room temperature
- 2 tbsp Dutch-process cocoa, sieved, plus extra for dusting
- 6 eggs, separated
- 150 gm caster sugar

- 1** Preheat oven to 190C, and butter a 22cm-diameter cake tin and line with baking paper.
- 2** Roast hazelnuts on an oven tray until golden (5-8 minutes). While warm, tip into a tea towel and rub to remove skins, then finely chop.
- 3** Melt chocolate and butter in a heatproof bowl over a saucepan of simmering water, stirring occasionally until smooth. Remove from heat, and stir in buttermilk, cocoa and egg yolks.
- 4** Meanwhile, whisk eggwhites until frothy in an electric mixer, then, while whisking, gradually add the sugar and whisk until glossy soft peaks form. Fold in chocolate mixture in batches along with hazelnuts, pour into prepared tin and bake until cake rises and cracks at the top (25-30 minutes). Cool in tin, gently pressing on top as it cools so it falls back evenly, then remove from tin, dust with cocoa and serve. Cake will keep for 2-3 days stored at room temperature in an airtight container.

Chocolate brioche

This is perfect for an Easter brunch – the dough proves overnight so it's ready in the morning to be rolled, baked and eaten warm.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 32 mins (plus proving, resting)

Serves 8-10 (pictured p113)

- 7 gm (1 sachet) dry yeast
- 300 gm (2 cups) plain flour
- 1 tbsp caster sugar
- 3 eggs
- 175 gm butter, diced, at room temperature
- 170 gm Valrhona Manjari with Candied Orange Peel chocolate (64% cocoa solids) (see note), finely chopped
- 1 egg yolk mixed with 1 tbsp milk for eggwash
- Pure icing sugar, for dusting

1 Combine yeast and 1½ tbsp lukewarm water in a small bowl and stand until foamy (5 minutes). Combine flour, sugar and ½ tsp salt in an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook. Add eggs and yeast mixture and mix until a dough forms. Gradually add butter, mixing in each addition before adding the next, until dough is smooth, shiny and elastic. Transfer to a lightly buttered bowl, cover indirectly with plastic wrap and set aside at room temperature until doubled in size (1-2 hours), then knock back lightly, cover and refrigerate overnight to prove and allow flavours to develop.

2 Divide brioche into quarters. Working with a piece at a time and keeping remaining pieces covered and refrigerated, knock back and roll to a rough 30cm x 14cm rectangle on a lightly floured surface. Transfer to a sheet of baking paper, scatter a third of the chocolate over, leaving a 1cm border. Repeat with another piece of dough and place on top of the first, then scatter with half the remaining chocolate. Repeat again using all the chocolate, then roll the last piece of dough and place on top. Roll dough lightly to press and smooth, then transfer to an oven tray lined with baking paper and refrigerate to rest and firm slightly (30-40 minutes).

3 Preheat oven to 190C. Along the long sides of brioche, slice inwards at 2cm intervals, leaving a 2cm strip uncut along the middle, creating a fringe of thick strips on the sides. Then, working from each end, fold and overlap the strips inwards so they come to the centre and pinch to join as so they don't separate during baking. Set brioche aside to prove until risen by a quarter again (15-20 minutes), then brush with eggwash and bake until puffed and golden and cooked through (25-30 minutes). Cool briefly, then dust with icing sugar and serve warm or at room temperature. Brioche is best eaten on the day it's made, but can be reheated successfully in a low oven the next day.

Note We've chosen Valrhona Manjari with Candied Orange Peel dark chocolate for its citrus note. It's available from select delicatessens and Simon Johnson food shops. If it's unavailable, use a dark chocolate with 58%-66% cocoa solids.

Ice-cream beignet sandwiches with chocolate sauce

Doughnuts stuffed with ice-cream and blanketed with chocolate sauce – what's not to like? It's easier and faster to serve these if you roll the ice-cream scoops beforehand and place them on a tray in the freezer ready to go when you need them.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 20 mins (plus cooling, proving)

Makes 12

- Vegetable oil, for deep-frying
- Vanilla bean ice-cream, to serve
- Pure icing sugar, for dusting

Beignet dough

- 55 gm (¼ cup) caster sugar
- 5 gm dry yeast
- 350 gm plain flour
- 90 ml pouring cream
- 1 egg
- Scraped seeds of ½ vanilla bean

Chocolate sauce


- 100 gm caster sugar
- 200 gm dark chocolate (55%-60% cocoa solids), finely chopped
- 90 gm butter, diced and softened

1 For beignet dough, combine sugar and 110ml lukewarm water in an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook, sprinkle yeast over and stand until foamy (5-10 minutes). Add flour, cream, egg, vanilla seeds and a pinch salt, and mix in an electric mixer until a wet sticky dough forms that which comes away from the sides of the bowl (2-3 minutes). Stand until dough starts to prove and increase in volume (20 minutes), then refrigerate until doubled in size (2-3 hours; you can also prove the dough overnight in the refrigerator for a deeper, yeasty flavour – you don't need to start the proving at room temperature to do this).

2 Meanwhile, for chocolate sauce, bring sugar and 200ml water to a simmer in a saucepan over medium-high heat, then add dark chocolate and stir until melted (1 minute). Add butter, remove from heat, stand for 5 minutes, then whisk until smooth and cooled to room temperature. You can do this ahead and refrigerate the sauce; it will thicken, so you'll need to warm it to serve.

3 Knock back beignet dough and roll out on a lightly floured bench to 5mm thick. Lift dough to loosen and prevent it springing back when cut, and roll again lightly to smooth. Cut into 6cm rounds with a floured cutter, and set aside on a tray lined with baking paper for 10 minutes to rest.

4 Meanwhile, heat oil in a deep saucepan or deep-fryer to 180C. Add beignet rounds in batches and deep-fry, turning occasionally, until golden and puffed (3-5 minutes; be careful, hot oil will spit). Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.

5 To serve, sandwich scoops of ice-cream in beignets, dust with icing sugar, drizzle with chocolate sauce and eat immediately. 

ICE-CREAM

SANDWICHES Platter from Dinosaur Designs. Tom Dixon coffee plunger and cups from De De Ce. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

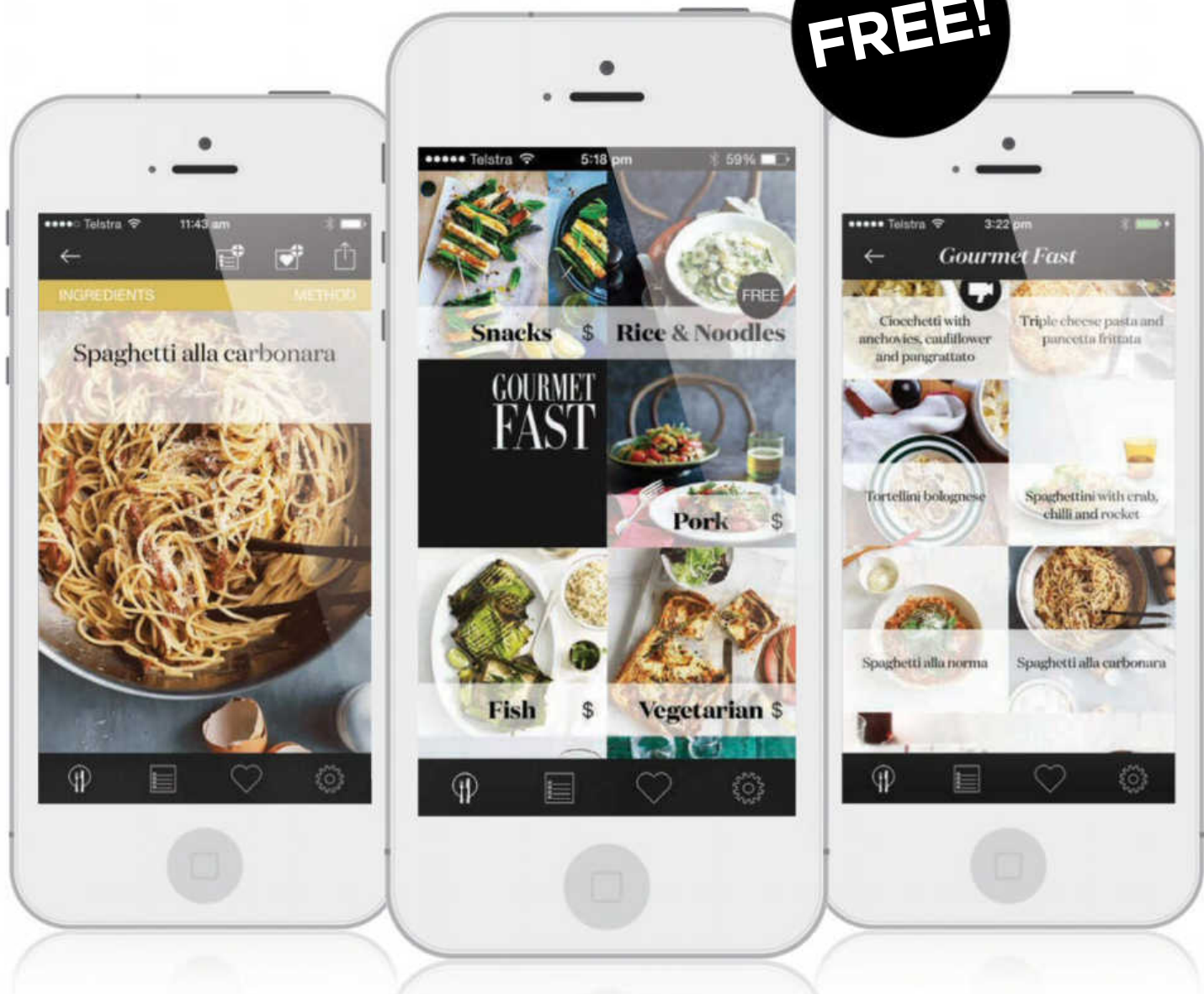
Ice-cream beignet sandwiches with chocolate sauce





BIG ON FLAVOUR,
SHORT ON EFFORT

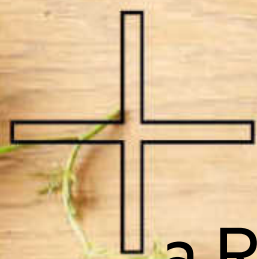
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MARCH 2016

food

From lazy brunch to Easter lunch, we've got your month covered.

Brunch with punch Long weekends are made for leisurely brunches and we've got the goods to get you jumping out of bed.

Farm to table Chefs Darren Robertson and Mark LaBrooy of Three Blue Ducks at The Farm have the recipe for fun, big-hearted dining. Easter lunch is sorted.

Best practice In his new book, *Best Kitchen Basics*, chef Mark Best shows how to elevate the everyday simply with good cooking. It's thought for food.

EGG HOPPERS

Tony Parker extension table (used throughout) from Workshopped. Helvig sideboard (used throughout) from Matt Blatt. White brick wallpaper (used throughout) from Emily

Ziz. Tolix antique chair (used throughout) from Life Interiors. Cutlery set in rose gold from Salt & Pepper. Volcanic bowl by Lightly. **ROLLS** Napkin from Walter G. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

Egg hitters with green sambol and coconut gravy (RECIPE P125)



brunch_{with} PUNCH

Long weekends are made for leisurely brunches and we've got the goods to get you jumping out of bed. Have your eggs this Easter with hoppers, or minty pea and zucchini fritters.

RECIPES & FOOD STYLING **EMMA KNOWLES & LISA FEATHERBY**
PHOTOGRAPHY **BEN DEARNLEY** STYLING **GERALDINE MUÑOZ**
DRINK SUGGESTIONS **MAX ALLEN**



Smoked trout and pickled
cauliflower rolls (RECIPE P125)

BLAT salad

Bacon, lettuce, avocado and tomato: it's pretty straightforward – delicious. Use free-range bacon, preferably from a smokehouse if you can find it, and whichever tomatoes are ripest on the day.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 20 mins

Serves 6

- 200 ml olive oil
- 200 gm thinly sliced rindless streaky bacon
- 200 gm Vienna-style white bread, diced
 - 1 garlic clove, crushed
 - 6 cups (loosely packed) mesclun
- 700 gm mixed cherry tomatoes, halved
- 4 oxheart tomatoes, cut into wedges
- 2 avocados, cut into wedges
- Buttermilk dressing**
- 130 ml buttermilk
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- Juice of 1 small lemon
- 2 tbsp mellow-flavoured extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp finely chopped chives

1 Preheat oven to 150C. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a large non-stick frying pan over high heat and fry bacon in batches, turning occasionally, until crisp (5-7 minutes). Transfer to an oven tray lined with baking paper and keep warm in the oven. Chop into bite-sized pieces before serving.

2 Strain bacon fat and wipe frying pan clean, then return strained fat to pan and bring to medium-high heat. Combine bread, garlic and remaining oil in a bowl and toss to coat bread. Season bread to taste and fry it in bacon fat, turning occasionally, until golden and crisp (2-4 minutes). Drain on paper towels briefly.

3 Meanwhile, for buttermilk dressing, shake ingredients in a sealed jar to combine and season to taste.

4 Combine mesclun, tomatoes and avocado in a bowl. Add bacon and fried bread and lightly toss to combine. Transfer to a platter, drizzle with buttermilk dressing and serve.

Wine suggestion Light sparkling prosecco.

BLAT Cutlery set and white side plate with blue print from Salt & Pepper. Pebble bowl (top in stack) from Mud Australia.

FRITTERS Copper tray and porcelain jug both from Lightly. Middle plate in stack from Citta Design. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

BLAT salad

Pea, zucchini and mint fritters with eggs and feta sauce

We love poached eggs, but they can be high maintenance if you're feeding more than a couple of people. This is where soft-boiled eggs come into the picture – cooking a dozen or more is a no-fuss proposition, and if you can't be bothered peeling them en masse, just break them in half and scoop them from their shells with a spoon instead.

Prep time 30 mins, cook 20 mins

Serves 6

- 500 gm frozen peas
 - 1 zucchini, coarsely grated, plus 1 extra, thinly sliced crossways on a mandolin
- 15 eggs, at room temperature
- 175 gm thick plain yoghurt
- 2 tbsp milk
- 100 gm finely grated Greek feta
 - ½ cup coarsely chopped mint, plus ½ cup extra leaves, to serve
- 2 spring onions, thinly sliced
- 120 gm self-raising flour
- ¾ tsp baking powder
- 2 tbsp lemon juice, plus extra wedges, to serve
- Olive oil, for shallow-frying
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- ¾ cup (loosely packed) pea tendrils
- 6 zucchini flowers, trimmed and halved lengthways
- Feta sauce**
- 200 gm Greek feta, coarsely crumbled
- 80 ml (⅓ cup) milk
- 60 ml (¼ cup) extra-virgin olive oil
- Juice of 1 lemon
- ½ garlic clove, finely chopped

1 For feta sauce, process ingredients in a small food processor until smooth. Season to taste and refrigerate until required.

2 Blanch peas in a saucepan of boiling salted water until tender and bright green (2-3 minutes; see cook's notes p184). Drain, reserve 100gm peas to serve, pulse remainder in a food processor to a rough purée (leave some whole for extra texture). Transfer to a bowl and stir in grated zucchini, 3 of the eggs, yoghurt, milk, feta, mint and spring onion. Stir in flour and baking powder, add half the lemon juice and season to taste.


3 Preheat oven to 120C. Heat about 1cm olive oil in a deep frying pan over medium-high heat. Add ½-cupfuls of batter and shallow-fry, turning occasionally, until golden brown (2-3 minutes). Drain on paper towels and place in a single layer on a baking tray in oven to keep warm.

4 Meanwhile, cook remaining 12 eggs in a large saucepan of boiling water until cooked to your liking (7 minutes for soft yolks). Drain, then, when cool enough to handle, peel.

5 Combine extra-virgin olive oil, pea tendrils, extra mint, sliced zucchini, zucchini flowers, reserved peas and remaining lemon juice in a bowl. Season to taste and toss to combine. Serve pea, zucchini and mint fritters with eggs and feta sauce, and scatter with pea tendril salad.

Wine suggestion Crisp, green apple-like sparkling chenin blanc.>






Pea, zucchini and
mint fritters with
eggs and feta sauce



MORE ONLINE

For more Easter brunch ideas head online for everything from devilled Easter eggs to praline bread pudding with bitter chocolate sorbet: gourmettraveller.com.au



Corn and grits with brown
butter and prawns

GRITS Jug (used
as vase) from Koskela.
Blue-rimmed plate
(bottom of stack) and
small Volcanic plate from
Lightly. **TEXT PAGE**
Copper Geo object
from Lightly. All other
props stylist's own.
Stockists p183.

Corn and grits with brown butter and prawns

Grits and prawns, a classic combination in the US, are taken to the next level here with the addition of fresh corn. This dish is full of flavour and filling, too, so a little goes a long way.

Prep time 15 mins, cook 1½ hrs

Serves 6-8

- 1 litre (4 cups) chicken stock, preferably homemade
- 200 gm grits (see note)
- 5 corn cobs, kernels removed
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 800 gm (18-20) uncooked prawns, peeled, tails intact
- 100 gm diced butter, softened
- 6 spring onions, coarsely chopped
- Cayenne pepper, to taste

1 Bring stock to the boil in a saucepan over medium-high heat, stir in grits, bring back to the boil and stir continuously until grits start to thicken (3-5 minutes). Reduce heat to low and cook, stirring occasionally, until thick (15-20 minutes). Add fresh corn kernels and 180ml water and cook until grits and corn are tender (40-50 minutes). Season to taste, cover directly with a piece of baking paper to prevent a skin forming and set aside in a warm place.

2 Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan over high heat. Add prawns and fry until opaque and pink (30 seconds to 1 minute each side). Transfer prawns to a warm plate and return pan to heat.

3 Lower heat to medium, add butter to pan and cook until foaming and nut-brown (1-2 minutes). Add spring onion, a pinch of cayenne pepper and salt to taste, and warm through.

4 Serve grits warm topped with prawns and spring onion in brown butter.

Note Grits, coarsely milled corn, are available from Asian grocers and select delicatessens.

Drink suggestion Cold, refreshing American lager.

Smoked trout and pickled cauliflower rolls

Begin this recipe three days ahead to pickle the cauliflower.

Prep time 15 mins, cook 5 mins (plus pickling)

Makes 4, serves 8 as a snack (pictured p121)

- 4 long bread rolls (about 19cm long), halved lengthways
- Melted butter, for brushing
- 2 cups torn mixed soft herbs, such as basil, dill and flat-leaf parsley
- ½ thinly sliced Spanish onion
- Extra-virgin olive oil, to taste
- Aïoli, to serve
- 2 whole smoked trout, skin and bones discarded, flesh flaked
- 150 gm Persian feta, crumbled
- Pickled cauliflower**
 - 1 small cauliflower (about 650 gm), broken into florets
 - 1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced
 - 3 salad onion bulbs, thinly sliced

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1½ tsp yellow mustard seeds
- 500 ml (2 cups) apple cider vinegar
- 140 gm caster sugar
- 1 tbsp sea salt flakes
- 80 gm sultanas
- 1 tsp finely grated ginger
- 4 small green chillies (optional)

1 For pickled cauliflower, blanch cauliflower and fennel until tender but still crisp (1-2 minutes; see cook's notes p184). Drain, rinse briefly under cold water to cool slightly and shake off excess water. Place in a bowl along with salad onion. Heat oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat, add mustard seeds and stir until seeds pop (10-20 seconds).

Add vinegar, sugar, salt and 200ml water and bring to a simmer. Add sultanas, ginger and chillies, then pour mixture over cauliflower. Place in a sterilised jar, seal and store in a cool dark place or refrigerate for 3 days before using. Pickles will keep up to 3 months.

2 Brush cut sides of bread halves with butter and fry cut-side down in a large non-stick frying pan until golden and toasted (2-3 minutes).

3 Combine herbs, onion and olive oil to taste in a bowl. Spread bases of rolls with aïoli, then top with smoked trout, herb salad and feta. Season to taste, sandwich with tops of bread and serve with cauliflower pickles.

Wine suggestion Lean, mineral chardonnay.

Egg hoppers with green sambol and coconut gravy

Hoppers are thin bowl-shaped pancakes found in Sri Lanka. Made with rice flour, they're excellent for someone with gluten intolerance and their shape makes them perfect to hold an egg and tasty curry gravy. Start this recipe a day ahead to ferment the hopper batter.

Prep time 40 mins, cook 1½ hrs (plus fermenting)

Serves 6-8 (pictured p120)

- Melted coconut oil, for frying
- 16 eggs
- Coriander sprigs and lime wedges, to serve
- Hopper batter**
 - 100 ml coconut water (from 1 young coconut)
 - 1 tsp dried yeast
 - 300 ml coconut milk
 - 200 gm rice flour
 - 100 ml soda water
- Coconut gravy**
 - 400 ml coconut milk
 - 1 onion, thinly sliced
 - 1 tbsp finely grated ginger
 - 8 fresh curry leaves
 - 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
 - 2 green chillies, thinly sliced
 - 1½ tsp ground turmeric
 - 1 cinnamon quill
 - ½ tsp each fenugreek seeds and brown mustard seeds
 - 30 gm yellow split peas
 - Juice of 1 lime, or to taste

Green sambol

- 100 gm finely grated fresh coconut
- ½ cup coarsely chopped coriander
- 3 long green chillies, finely chopped
- 1 red shallot, finely chopped
- Juice of 1 lime, or to taste

1 For hopper batter, warm coconut water in a saucepan to lukewarm, remove from heat and whisk in yeast. Set aside in a warm place until foamy (4-5 minutes), then whisk in coconut milk. Combine rice flour and a generous pinch of salt in a bowl and whisk in yeast mixture to form a thin, smooth batter. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside at room temperature overnight to ferment. Whisk in soda water – batter should be the consistency of a thin crêpe batter. Add a little extra soda water if necessary.

2 For coconut gravy, combine ingredients except lime juice in a saucepan and add 250ml water. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until well flavoured and split peas break down completely (20-25 minutes). Season to taste, add lime and keep warm. Gravy can be made 2-3 days ahead and reheated.

3 For green sambol, combine ingredients in a bowl, season to taste with salt and set aside.

4 Preheat oven to 160C. Heat a hopper pan (see note) or small frying pan over medium-high heat. Dip a crunched-up piece of paper towel into the melted coconut oil, wipe around pan, then add 60ml hopper batter and swirl pan to thinly coat sides. Crack an egg on top, cover pan and cook until egg is just cooked and pancake is crisp (2-2½ minutes). Run a small palette knife around sides of pan to loosen hopper, slide hopper onto a baking tray lined with baking paper and repeat with remaining batter and eggs. Transfer to oven to warm through (4-5 minutes). Top with coconut gravy and coriander sprigs and serve hot with green sambol and lime wedges.

Note A hopper pan is a two-handled round-based pan, available from Indian and Sri Lankan specialist shops. A small non-stick frying pan also works nicely – the ideal size is 18cm diameter.

Wine suggestion Toasty, lime-juicy bottle-aged riesling.>

HOT TIP

When you're cooking pancakes, don't stack them – they'll sweat; place them in a single layer on a tray lined with baking paper in a low oven to keep warm.

Pancakes with quark and peaches

Peaches and maple syrup are a great combination, although you can use whatever fruit is best on the day. You can make the batter ahead; just add the whisked eggwhite at the last minute.

Prep time 15 mins, cook 10 mins

Serves 6

- 175 gm self-raising flour, sieved
- 300 ml buttermilk
- 2 eggs, separated
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 20 gm butter, diced
- 6 peaches, halved
- Caster sugar, for dusting
- 200 gm quark (see note)
- Maple syrup, to serve

1 For pancake batter, combine flour and a pinch of salt in a bowl. Lightly whisk buttermilk and yolks in a jug to combine, then add to flour and whisk until smooth. Whisk eggwhite in a separate bowl until soft peaks form, then fold into batter.

2 Heat half the oil and half the butter in a non-stick frying pan to medium-high heat until butter foams. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of batter at a time and cook until bubbles appear (2-3 minutes). Flip and cook until pancake is golden and cooked through (2-3 minutes). Keep warm and repeat with remaining oil, butter and batter.

3 Preheat a grill to high. Place peaches cut-side up on a baking tray lined with foil. Scatter with sugar and grill until golden and bubbling (2-3 minutes).

4 Serve pancakes warm with peaches, quark and maple syrup.

Note Quark is a soft cheese available from select delicatessens and supermarkets. If it's unavailable substitute ricotta or double cream.

Wine suggestion Peachy, medium-sweet riesling.

Cherry, almond and yoghurt tart

The base of this tart is brioche-like in texture, with a beautifully buttery flavour. Drained yoghurt adds tang, while end-of-season cherries are a no-brainer in this mix. That said, other in-season fruits could be lovely – plums would be beautiful, too, or as the weather cools, apples. Begin this recipe a day ahead to drain the yoghurt.

Prep time 40 mins, cook 30 mins (plus draining, proving)

Serves 6-8

- 350 gm Greek-style yoghurt, plus extra to serve
- 160 gm honey, plus extra to serve

- Scraped seeds of 1 vanilla bean
- 350 gm ($2\frac{1}{2}$ cups) plain flour
- 7 gm (1 sachet) dried yeast
- 2 tbsp milk
- 1 egg
- 1 egg yolk
- 110 gm softened butter, diced
- 250 gm cherries, halved and pitted, plus extra whole cherries to serve
- Almond praline**
- 50 gm honey
- 50 gm caster sugar
- 60 gm roasted almonds
- 1 tsp rosewater

1 Stir yoghurt and 80gm honey in a bowl to combine, then transfer to a sieve lined with muslin placed over a bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight to drain. Transfer drained yoghurt to a bowl, stir in vanilla seeds, cover and refrigerate until required. Reserve 80ml of the whey and discard remaining.

2 For almond praline, stir honey, sugar and 2 tbsp water in a saucepan over medium-high heat until dissolved, then cook, without stirring, until caramelised (4-5 minutes). Remove from heat, stir in almonds, rosewater and a pinch of salt, then tip onto a well-oiled baking tray and stand to set. Break into rough pieces, then process to coarse crumbs in a food processor. Store in an airtight

container until required. Praline can be made several days ahead.

3 Combine flour, yeast and a pinch of salt in an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook and mix well. Gently warm reserved whey and remaining honey in a small saucepan over low heat. Remove from heat and whisk in milk, egg and yolk. With mixer on low-medium speed, add egg mixture to flour and mix to combine (a little flour will remain at the bottom of the bowl). On medium speed, gradually add butter and knead until smooth and glossy, scattering in a little extra flour if needed to help the dough move around the bowl (2-3 minutes). Transfer to a buttered bowl, turn to coat and cover with plastic wrap. Stand in a warm place until doubled in size (1½-2 hours). You can make the dough the night before and refrigerate it. Bring to room temperature before rolling.

4 Preheat oven to 200C. Roll dough on a lightly floured surface to a rough 35cm x 15cm oval. Place on a baking tray lined with baking paper and prick all over with a fork. Spread drained yoghurt evenly on top, leaving a 2cm border. Scatter with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup praline then cherries. Brush edges with eggwash (see cook's notes p184), scatter top with sugar and another 1 tbsp praline. Bake until golden brown and cooked through (25-30 minutes). Serve warm or at room temperature with remaining praline, extra yoghurt and cherries.

Drink suggestion Bright cherry and apple cider. ●



Pancakes with quark and peaches

TART Cutlery from Salt & Pepper. Strokes indigo cotton from Walter G. Slate serving board from Citta Design. Denim blue bowl from The Fortynine Studio. **PANCAKES** Cutlery from Salt & Pepper. Volcanic side plate (bottom) and blue-rimmed porcelain side plate from Lightly. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

Cherry, almond
and yoghurt tart



FARM *to* TABLE

Chefs Darren Robertson and Mark LaBrooy of Three Blue Ducks at The Farm have the recipe for fun, big-hearted dining. Easter lunch is sorted.

RECIPES DARREN ROBERTSON & MARK LABROOY

WORDS MAGGIE SCARDIFIELD PHOTOGRAPHY WILLIAM MEPPEN

STYLING EMMA KNOWLES DRINK SUGGESTIONS MAX ALLEN



RAW FISH

Tablecloth from Adairs.
Bowl from Robert
Gordon. Votive (used
throughout) from Liberty

Trading Co. Copper bells
and succulent from
Flowers at the Farm.
All other props stylist's
own. Stockists p183.



Raw fish, buttermilk,
ginger, rhubarb and
fennel (RECIPE P131)



Three Blue Ducks chef and co-owner Mark LaBrooy just watched a three-and-a-half metre bull shark devour a 15-kilo kingfish. “He made a real mincer of my dinner,” he says matter of factly. It’s all in a day’s work for LaBrooy and fellow chef Darren Robertson, who moved to the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales 18 months ago to open Three Blue Ducks at The Farm. The 2016 *GT* Regional Restaurant of the Year is the Ducks’ second café-restaurant (the first is in Sydney’s Bronte), set on a 34-hectare farm in Ewingsdale, just outside Byron Bay. It’s a huge operation. On busy days, it caters for upwards of a thousand covers, and yet LaBrooy and Robertson still find time for free-diving, spearfishing and a surf. “The things you see in the ocean are amazing and humbling,” says LaBrooy. “It really puts things in perspective.”

When they opened the restaurant, they’d planned to source their produce strictly from within a 500-kilometre radius, but they’ve gone a little less locavore of late. “To really showcase what’s going on around the country, we decided to cast the net a little wider,” says Robertson.

The Ducks made their reputation with a relaxed, straight-off-the-beach approach to cooking and eating. For Easter lunch, that translates to the likes of home-grown ginger with buttermilk-dressed flame-tail snapper, a sashimi-grade fish the boys have sourced direct from Freckle, their go-to for seafood in Byron. “A van turns up to us before it even gets to the shop,” says LaBrooy. “We have to wait a day to use the fish because it’s too fresh.”

The rest of the menu is similarly fun and uncomplicated, with most of the dishes coming straight off the barbecue. Whole fish is cooked over coals and topped with coriander and citrus paste; a fragrant watermelon and radish salad cuts through the sticky caramel notes of Bourbon-glazed pork belly.

“When everything is trimmed and portioned, it’s a lot more washing up,” says Robertson. “We like it when everyone’s picking at things with their fingers,” says LaBrooy. “Keep it loose so people can get stuck in. Then hit the beach.” *Three Blue Ducks, The Farm, 11 Ewingsdale Rd, Ewingsdale, NSW, (02) 6684 7795, threeblueducks.com*

THREE BLUE DUCKS

LUNCH MENU

- + RAW FISH, BUTTERMILK, GINGER, RHUBARB AND FENNEL
- + SPICY BOURBON PORK
- + WATERMELON AND RADISH SALAD
- + BARBECUED WHOLE FISH WITH LEMONGRASS AND LIME LEAVES
- + RED CABBAGE, JICAMA AND CITRUS
- + OCTOPUS, CORN, MINT AND FARRO
- + CHARRED PINEAPPLE WITH LEMON AND GINGER GRANITA, CASHEW PRALINE AND THAI BASIL
- + BEETROOT AND CHOCOLATE WITH BURNT ORANGE





Spicy Bourbon pork with watermelon and radish salad

Raw fish, buttermilk, ginger, rhubarb and fennel

"Raw fish is an excellent hot weather entrée," says Darren Robertson. "We've used flame-tail snapper, but use whatever is best at the market on the day. Snapper and kingfish are always great options."

Start this recipe a day ahead to pickle the rhubarb.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 5 mins (plus pickling rhubarb overnight and cooling)

Serves 6-8 (pictured p129)

- 200 ml buttermilk
- Juice of 1 lime, finely grated rind of ½, plus extra wedges to serve
- 1 tbsp finely grated ginger
- 500 gm sashimi-grade white fish fillet
- 2 Lebanese cucumbers, peeled, halved lengthways and sliced
- Fennel flowers or fennel pollen (optional) and extra-virgin olive oil, to serve
- Pickled rhubarb**
- 100 ml white wine vinegar
- 2½ tbsp caster sugar
- 1 star anise
- 1 rhubarb stalk, thinly sliced
- 1 long red chilli, thinly sliced

- 1** For pickled rhubarb, stir vinegar, sugar, star anise and 100ml water in a saucepan over medium-high heat to dissolve sugar, then bring to the boil. Remove from heat and cool (15-20 minutes). Add rhubarb and chilli and refrigerate for at least 24 hours to pickle.
- 2** Whisk buttermilk, lime juice and rind, ginger and about 1 tbsp drained pickled rhubarb in a bowl to combine. Season to taste.
- 3** Thinly slice the fish across the grain with a very sharp knife, then combine in a bowl with cucumber and a little buttermilk dressing. Toss to coat, then arrange on a serving plate, scatter with pickled rhubarb and fennel flowers or pollen, drizzle with extra buttermilk dressing and extra-virgin olive oil, and serve.

Wine suggestion *Lemony, chalky dry sémillon.*

PORK & SALAD

Succulents (used throughout) and copper bells (used throughout) from Flowers at the Farm. HK Living bowl from Our Cornerstore.

RIGHT Vintage bottle from Ici et là (used throughout). HK Living tumbler from Our Cornerstore. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.



Spicy Bourbon pork

"This one is a sure-fire crowd-pleaser," says Robertson.

"It's hard to go wrong with the robust flavours of Bourbon, and spices such as paprika, ginger and cumin, especially when they're cooked down into a finger-licking sticky glaze."

Prep time 15 mins, cook 10 mins (plus marinating)

Serves 6-8

- 80 ml (⅓ cup) apple cider vinegar
- 50 gm honey
- 40 ml Bourbon
- 40 gm (⅓ cup) smoked paprika
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 2 tbsp chilli flakes
- 2 tsp ground ginger
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- Finely grated rind of 1 lemon and 1 lime, plus extra wedges of each to serve
- 1 kg skinless, boneless pork belly, cut into 1cm strips

- 1** Mix vinegar, honey, Bourbon, paprika, sugar, chilli flakes, ginger, cumin, cinnamon and citrus rinds together in a large bowl with 3 tsp sea salt flakes. Add pork belly, and mix to combine and coat well. Cover and refrigerate for 2-4 hours.
- 2** Heat a barbecue or a char-grill pan to medium-high heat. Lightly oil the bars or pan and grill the pork in batches, turning occasionally, until cooked through and well browned (8-10 minutes). Squeeze lemon and lime juice over pork and serve hot.

Wine suggestion *Full-bodied, earthy mourvèdre.*

Watermelon and radish salad

"This is a super-simple salad made with the freshest ingredients we can lay our hands on – sweet watermelon, plus crunchy radishes straight from The Farm," says Robertson. "It's fresh and acidic – perfect with rich, sweet meats like the spicy pork."

Prep time 15 mins

Serves 6-8

- 200 gm (1¼ cups) watermelon flesh, coarsely chopped
- 12 baby red radishes, scrubbed, cut into wedges or quartered, depending on size
- 2 Lebanese cucumbers, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 2 vine-ripened tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup each mint and coriander
- 1 jalapeño chilli, very thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Juice of 1 lime

- 1** Mix watermelon, radish, cucumber, tomato, herbs and chilli in a large bowl, then add oil and lime juice to taste. Season to taste, toss to combine and serve.>

FISH Copper bells from Prism. Ornament from Our Cornerstore. Bowl (with chillies) from Bison. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.



Barbecued whole fish with lemongrass and lime leaves



Red cabbage, jicama and citrus

Barbecued whole fish with lemongrass and lime leaves

"This dish is all about a flavour-packed paste," says Robertson. "Ginger, garlic, coriander roots and loads of citrus – all smashed up together and spread over the fish."

Prep time 20 mins, cook 10 mins (plus marinating)

Serves 6-8

- 100 gm long green chillies (about 5), coarsely chopped
- 60 gm ginger, coarsely chopped
- 50 gm thinly sliced lemongrass (about 2 stalks, white part only), plus extra to serve
- 40 gm garlic (about 10 cloves)
- 20 gm (½ cup) kaffir lime leaves, very thinly sliced, plus extra to serve
- Coriander roots (from 1 bunch), washed, dried and chopped, plus leaves to serve
- 2 spring onions, coarsely chopped
- 1 tbsp finely grated palm sugar
- 4 whole snapper (500gm each), scaled and gutted
- 60 ml (¼ cup) grapeseed oil
- Juice of 1 lemon and 1 lime
- Sliced pickled chilli, to serve (see note)

1 Pound chilli, ginger, lemongrass, garlic, kaffir lime leaves, coriander roots, spring onion, palm sugar and 2 tsp sea salt with a large mortar and pestle, or blend in a blender to a paste, then add oil and mix to combine.

2 Slash both sides of each fish 4-5 times with a sharp knife, then rub marinade all over and inside the cavity. Cover and refrigerate for 2-3 hours to marinate. Remove from fridge 20 minutes before cooking to come to room temperature.

3 Heat barbecue or a char-grill pan to medium-high heat and lightly oil grill or pan. Barbecue fish until charred and just cooked through on one side (5-6 minutes). Turn and repeat. Season to taste, squeeze lemon and lime juice over, scatter with lemongrass, lime leaves, coriander and pickled chilli and serve.

Note The Ducks use the pickled chilli from the pickled rhubarb recipe (see page 131); otherwise buy pickled chillies from select delicatessens.

Wine suggestion Zesty young dry riesling.

Red cabbage, jicama and citrus

"This goes just as well with the fish as it does the pork," says Robertson.

Prep time 15 mins

Serves 6-8

- 1 ruby grapefruit
- ½ small red cabbage, thinly sliced on mandolin
- 1 small jicama (300gm), peeled, quartered and thinly sliced on a mandolin (see note)
- 2 spring onions, thinly sliced
- ½ pickled chilli (see note above), thinly sliced
- Handful each of mint and coriander leaves, torn
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp honey



1 Cut grapefruit in half, squeeze one half, peel and roughly dice the other half. Combine in a bowl with cabbage, jicama, spring onion, pickled chilli and herbs.

2 Whisk together grapefruit juice, olive oil, soy sauce and honey in a bowl. Season to taste, drizzle onto salad, toss to combine and serve.

Note Jicama, also called yam bean, is available from select supermarkets and Asian greengrocers.>





Octopus, corn, mint
and farro

Octopus, corn, mint and farro

"There's so much incredible seafood around here, and it suits the hotter climate up north, especially when it's cooked on the barbie," says Robertson. "We love adding a grain to the mix, too – farro is one of the best."

Prep time 30 mins, cook 40 mins (plus resting)

Serves 6-8

- 150 gm farro (see note)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Finely grated rind and juice of 1½ lemons
- 1 pink grapefruit or 2 blood oranges, segmented, juice squeezed from centre
- 3 corn cobs, husks peeled, silks removed
- 600 gm cleaned baby octopus (about 10), halved
- 1 small garlic clove, finely grated
- 1 tbsp grapeseed oil
- 2 spring onions, thinly sliced
- 2 long red chillies, seeded and thinly sliced
- 1½ cups mint

1 Cook the farro in a saucepan of boiling salted water over medium-high heat until tender (30-40 minutes). Drain and transfer to a bowl to cool for 5 minutes. Add olive oil, lemon rind, lemon juice and grapefruit juice, season to taste and stir to combine.

2 Meanwhile, heat a barbecue or a char-grill pan to high heat. Grill corn, turning occasionally, until charred and tender (15-20 minutes). Cut kernels from the cob and add to farro mixture.

3 Season octopus with garlic, salt and pepper, toss with grapeseed oil, and grill until lightly charred and tender (2-3 minutes). Transfer to a bowl and rest for 5 minutes. Add to farro mixture along with spring onion, chilli and mint. Toss lightly to combine, season to taste and serve.

Note Farro is available from select delicatessens.

Wine suggestion A full-bodied Italian white such as *fiano*.

OCTOPUS Bowl from Robert Gordon Australia. Napkin (used throughout) from West Elm. Prism ornament from Our Cornerstore.

PINEAPPLE Bowl from Hayden Youlley. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

Charred pineapple with lemon and ginger granita, cashew praline and Thai basil

"This dish is really easy to prepare and serve later, and can easily be scaled up to serve 50 people if you like," says Robertson. "It tastes delicious and is perfect for hot days. It's a dish you have to prepare the day before – the granita needs to set overnight in the freezer before you can serve it."

Prep time 30 mins, cook 5 mins (plus cooling, freezing)

Serves 6-8

- 1 very ripe pineapple
- Handful of Thai basil
- Lemon and ginger granita**
- 250 gm caster sugar
- 100 gm ginger, peeled and coarsely grated
- 1 small red chilli, coarsely chopped
- 375 ml (1½ cups) lemon juice
- Cashew praline**
- 100 gm roasted cashew nuts
- 150 gm caster sugar

1 For lemon and ginger granita, stir sugar, ginger, chilli and 500ml water in a large saucepan over medium-high heat until sugar dissolves. Bring to the boil, then remove from heat. Add lemon juice, cool to room temperature, then strain into an oversized container and freeze overnight – the large container means you can scratch the granita up tomorrow and it won't spill everywhere, melt, and leave a sticky mess in your kitchen.

2 For cashew praline, spread cashew nuts on a baking tray lined with baking paper. Cook sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat without stirring until melted, then bring to the boil and cook until dark caramel in colour (3-4 minutes). Pour caramel over nuts (be careful, this is very hot and can burn). Stand until cooled and hard, then break into pieces and crush with a mortar and pestle or the handle of a heavy knife. Store in an airtight container until required. This can be made a couple of days ahead.

3 Heat a barbecue or a char-grill pan to high heat. Top and tail the pineapple, leaving the skin on, halve it lengthways and cut each half lengthways into 4 wedges, making 8 in total. Grill the pineapple cut-side down on each side until you get lovely char lines on the flesh (2-3 minutes each side).

4 To serve, place the pineapple in serving bowls. Scrape the granita with a fork and place 2-3 tablespoonfuls on top of each serving of pineapple, sprinkle with the cashew praline and Thai basil, and you're off.

Wine suggestion Intense golden *botrytis riesling*.>



Charred pineapple with
lemon and ginger
granita, cashew praline
and Thai basil





Beetroot and chocolate with burnt orange

"This dish was created using staples we always have in our kitchen, like chocolate ganache and brownie," says Robertson. "It may seem like a lot of work to make them at home, but I can assure you it's worth it in the end. The recipe will make more brownie than you need, but it won't go to waste. If you don't want to make the brownie you could crush up some shop-bought chocolate cookies instead."

Prep time 1 hr, cook 1 hr 20 mins (plus chilling, freezing, cooling)

Serves 6-8

Bee pollen and red vein sorrel (optional), to serve

Beetroot ice-cream

- 1 litre (4 cups) beetroot juice (see note)
- 500 ml (2 cups) pouring cream
- 500 ml (2 cups) milk
- 1 vanilla bean, split and seeds scraped
- 10 egg yolks
- 200 gm caster sugar

Chocolate brownie

- 250 gm butter, diced, plus extra for greasing
- 750 gm dark chocolate, (66% cocoa solids), finely chopped
- 5 eggs
- 165 gm caster sugar
- 180 gm plain flour
- 2 handfuls walnuts

Chocolate ganache

- 300 gm dark chocolate, (66% cocoa solids), finely chopped
- 150 ml pouring cream

- 1 tsp liquid glucose

Burnt orange

- 2 oranges, skin on, diced and seeds discarded

- 80 gm (1/3 cup) caster sugar
- Pinch of ground cinnamon

Goji sherbert

- 60 gm goji berries, dehydrated in a low oven (see note)
- 1 heaped tsp citric acid
- 1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda

1 For beetroot ice-cream, boil beetroot juice in a saucepan over medium-high heat until reduced to 200ml (10-12 minutes). Set aside to cool. Bring cream, milk and vanilla bean and seeds to the boil in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Whisk yolks and sugar in a bowl until thick and pale (5-6 minutes). Whisk in beetroot reduction, then pour in cream mixture, whisking continuously. Place over a saucepan of simmering water and stir continuously until thick (7-8 minutes). Refrigerate overnight for flavours to develop, then churn in an ice-cream machine and freeze until required. Makes about 1 1/2 litres.

2 For chocolate brownie, preheat oven to 160C, and butter and line a 25cm-square cake tin with baking paper. Melt butter and chocolate in a bowl over a saucepan of simmering water, stirring occasionally, until smooth. Whisk eggs and sugar in an electric mixer until thick and pale. Pour in chocolate mixture and fold to combine, fold in the flour and a pinch of salt, then fold in walnuts. Pour into prepared tin and bake until a skewer withdraws clean (40-45 minutes). Cool, then tear off a quarter of the brownie and crumble into little pieces. Remaining brownie will keep stored in an airtight container for a week.

3 For ganache, combine ingredients in a bowl over a saucepan of simmering water and stir occasionally until smooth and well combined


(4-5 minutes). Transfer to a container, cool to room temperature, then refrigerate until required. Bring out of the fridge to soften slightly before serving.

4 For burnt orange, heat a heavy-based frying pan over high heat until very hot. Toss the orange in and let it burn and colour – not for too long, but you want to see some blackening (1-2 minutes). Scatter the sugar and cinnamon over the orange and a quick caramelisation should occur. Transfer to the food processor, give it a whizz until coarse crumbs form and set aside.

5 For goji sherbet, whizz ingredients in a small dry food processor to fine crumbs – make sure the goji berries are completely dried or the mixture will become sticky and ball up. Store in a dry airtight container.

6 To serve, place a heaped tablespoonful of ganache in the base of each bowl and smear it around a little, then place a spoonful of burnt orange in each bowl. Sprinkle in brownie crumb, then goji sherbet, as well as bee pollen if you're using it. Scoop beetroot ice-cream on top, scatter with sorrel leaves and serve straight away.

Note If you don't have a juicer, buy beetroot juice from a juice bar or greengrocer. Goji berries are available from health-food shops and the health-food section of select supermarkets.

Wine suggestion Bold young vintage Port. 

BETROOT All
props stylist's own.

Beetroot and chocolate
with burnt orange



Piperade
(RECIPE P142)



Best PRACTICE

In his new book, *Best Kitchen Basics*, chef Mark Best shows how to elevate the everyday simply with good cooking. It's thought for food.

RECIPES & FOOD STYLING **MARK BEST** WORDS **PAT NOURSE**
PHOTOGRAPHY **PETRINA TINSLAY** STYLING **GERALDINE MUÑOZ**



Roast broccoli (RECIPE P143)

MARK BEST



Mark Best is being sanguine about his first book. Prod him on the subject of *Marque: A Culinary Adventure* and the Sydney-based chef concedes that maybe in 2011 the world wasn't quite ready for recipes that didn't stoop to offer anything so banal as a list of ingredients. "I thought I was doing the world a favour by writing them that way, and that by decoding them the readers would own them, but in fact I just made people hate me more," he says. "If that was possible."

In *Best Kitchen Basics*, by contrast, he has gone with the radical approach of writing ingredient lists and methods that the reader can readily follow in the conventional manner. The constants across the two books – and Best's career, both at Marque and his Pei Modern bistros in Sydney and Melbourne – are an inquisitive mind, and a gift for acute observation.

One of the joys of the new book is the chance to see things through Best's gimlet eyes, whether it's the "deep and black" loam of his grandfather's home garden ("nurtured by his rough hands and the shit of a thousand chickens") or the "exactness and efficiency" of his nanna's cooking in rural South Australia. His recipe for mandarin sherbet prompts

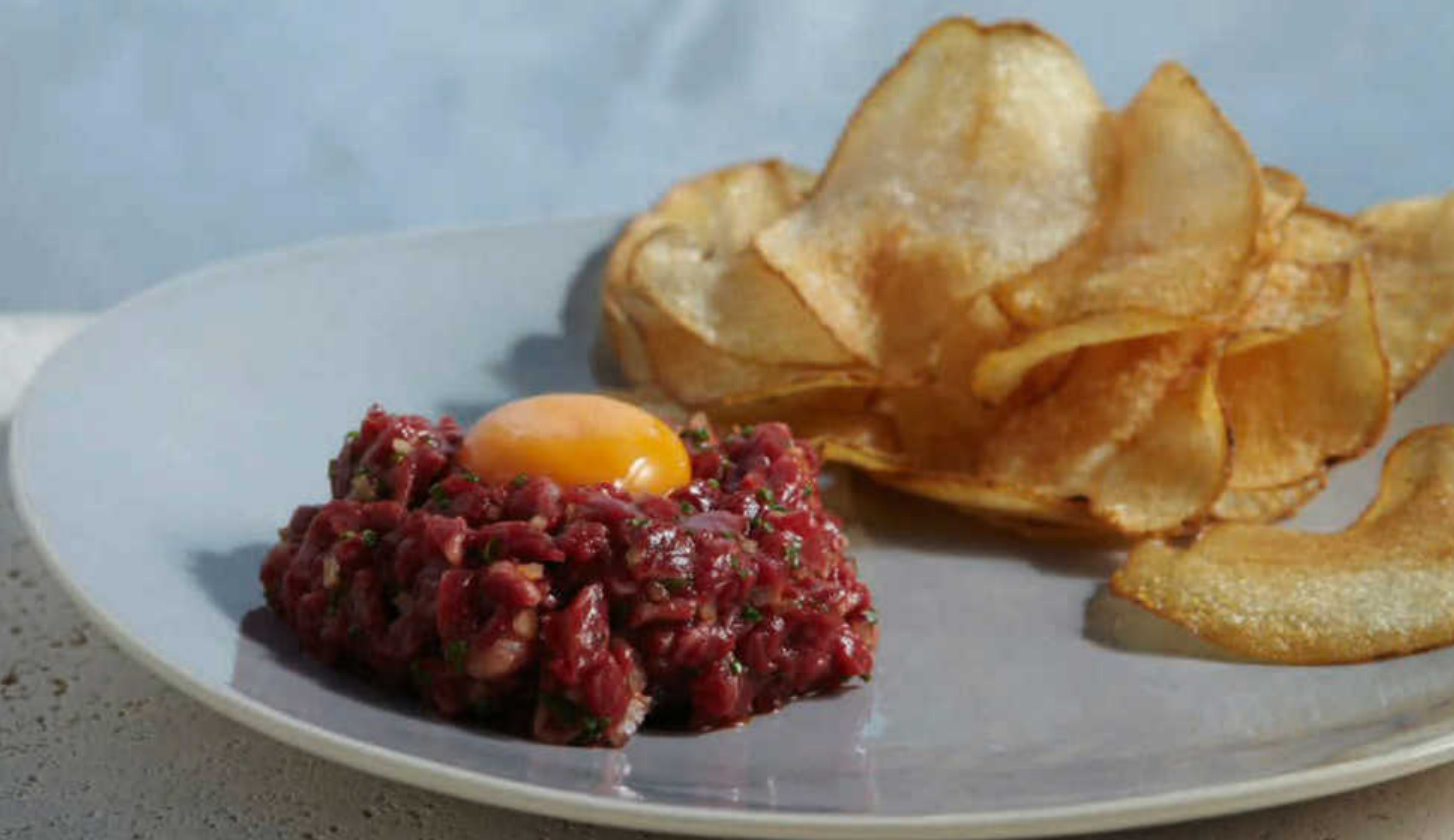
a note that "kids and the dull of mind do not like bitter", while he says orecchiette were originally handmade but "are now made by machine because nonnas are in short supply and too expensive to run". "If you don't like things with heads or eyes," meanwhile, "it might just be time to get over it."

The overarching theme to the food is that "good cooking is not about luxury ingredients, nor should they be expensive or rare. It is a response to what you have, not what you want."

Many of the recipes total no more than four or five ingredients, and the book bulges with dishes that succeed on the strength of good ideas rather than trickery or toil. Carrots and miso combine to become a sublime sauce for small birds and pink fish, Chartreuse enlivens the orange and polenta cake, corn becomes custard in a trice, while broccoli is roasted to glory.

It's Best's hope that *Kitchen Basics* will add something new to your repertoire, however modest. "Even if you can take away just one or two things that you're then going to cook forever, that would be a good result for me," he says. "One dog-eared page in the book would be a win."

Marque, 4-5/355 Crown St, Surry Hills, NSW,
(02) 9332 2225, marquerestaurant.com.au



Beef tartare

(RECIPE P143)

READER DINNER INVITATION

Join us as we celebrate the launch of Mark Best's new book, *Best Kitchen Basics*, at our reader dinner on 21 March. See page 35 for details.

Rabbit rillettes

"I heard the term 'underground mutton' many times from my father and grandfather, a rather oblique reference to food shortages and our troubles in the Great Depression and book-end world wars," says Mark Best. "Rabbit was for the poor and its reputation took many decades to recover. I remember trapping rabbits, shooting rabbits and myxomatosis, but I can't remember eating rabbits. I was first introduced to the idea of rillettes through the post-war writings of Elizabeth David. She wrote evocatively of the sunny French Mediterranean, its noble peasant cuisine and how it was an effective tonic for her country recovering from the Second World War and in the middle of rationing. I also read about it in the Roux Brothers' French Country Cooking and Richard Olney's Simple French Food. This recipe emanates from those readings." Start this recipe at least a day ahead to give the rillettes' flavours time to develop.

Serves 8

- 1 small wild rabbit
- 300 gm diced pork shoulder
- 100 gm coarse salt
- 500 gm duck fat
- 1 garlic bulb, cloves separated and peeled
- 3 cloves
- 1 star anise
- 6 fresh bay leaves

- 1** Remove the front and hind legs from the rabbit. Cut the body into 4 pieces across the backbone with a heavy knife. Put the rabbit, pork and salt in a large bowl, mix well, and refrigerate for 12 hours.
- 2** Remove from the refrigerator and rinse off the salt under running water. In a heavy casserole over medium heat, melt the duck fat. Add the meat and the remaining ingredients, except the bay leaves. Reduce heat to low and cook very slowly until the meat starts to come away from the bone

and the pork starts to fall apart (2-3 hours).

Remove the meat from the casserole. Strain the fat and cook it in a saucepan over low heat to evaporate any water. Discard the spices.

3 Shred the meat with 2 forks and add some of the fat to moisten it. Transfer the meat to a receptacle, such as a wide-mouthed mason jar or terracotta dish, pressing on the meat to make it as flat as possible. Garnish the surface with the bay leaves and cover with 1cm of the reserved fat. Refrigerate until the fat is firm and opaque.

4 The rillettes can be eaten after 24 hours, but are far better after a few weeks. Store for up to 2 months.

Piperade

"With far more vitamin C than your average orange, the capsicum is a surprising fruit," says Best. "Its true character is released by long, slow cooking to reveal a seductive texture and richness. Piperade is the Basque cousin of the more common French ratatouille (with as many versions), and has a delicious affinity with eggs."

Serves 4 (pictured p138)

- 4 ripe red capsicum
- 4 green capsicum
- 50 ml virgin olive oil
- 1 large Spanish onion, thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 4 star anise
- 1 cinnamon quill
- 3 tsp (10gm) demerara sugar
- 4 whole dried chillies (see note)
- 6 ripe tomatoes

1 Blacken the skin of the capsicum over a gas flame or with a kitchen blowtorch. When the skins are completely charred, place the capsicum in a container with a tight-fitting lid to steam. When cool, rinse off the skins under running water.

2 Segment the capsicum following the natural lines, removing the stem and seeds. Pat the segments dry with paper towels.

3 Heat 25ml of the olive oil in a frying pan over medium heat and sauté the onion, garlic, 1 tsp sea salt, ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper and spices until the onion is golden. Transfer to an ovenproof casserole.

4 Heat the remaining oil in the same frying pan and sauté the capsicum over high heat. Add the sugar and continue to toss until the capsicum starts to caramelise. Transfer this mixture to the casserole along with the dried chillies.

5 Preheat the oven to 160C. Core the tomatoes and blister the skins with a blowtorch. Gently rub off the skins with paper towels. Chop the tomatoes coarsely and add them to the casserole. Cover the casserole with a piece of baking paper and bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes until the capsicum is soft. Leave to cool a little then serve.

Note To make your own dried chillies, buy extra-long red chillies when they're in season and dehydrate them overnight in a 60C oven. They make an excellent addition to the pantry and can be used wherever you want a deep chilli flavour over the attack of fresh. Cold-smoke them for amazing complexity.



Rabbit rillettes

Beef tartare

"Tartare is a ubiquitous menu staple and can be delicious when prepared well," says Best. "My version of the classic puts new tyres on it and takes it for a spin. Tabasco is replaced by sriracha, a delicious condiment that originated in Thailand but found fame in the Huy Fong foods Rooster brand created and manufactured in California by a Vietnamese refugee – it's a funny old world. The other spices and condiments follow the theme and produce a dish of charming heat and umami. This could be served as an appetiser, main or beer snack."

Serves 4 (pictured p141)

- 400 gm best-quality grass-fed beef (dry-aged rump for preference)
- 1 small Spanish onion, finely chopped
- ½ bunch of garlic chives, finely chopped
- 2 tsp sriracha
- ¼ tsp ground Sichuan pepper
- 4 best-quality free-range egg yolks

- 1** Using a very sharp kitchen knife, coarsely mince the beef.
- 2** Combine the onion, chives and beef with the sriracha, Sichuan pepper, 1 tsp sea salt and ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper. Mix well. Divide the tartare among 4 serving plates.
- 3** Either sit the egg yolks on top of the tartare or stir them in until thoroughly combined. Serve the tartare with homemade potato chips, if desired.



Risotto Milanese

“Risotto is one of those traditional dishes so surrounded by *rules and lore* that it’s hard for any two people to agree on what is ‘correct.’”

Roast broccoli

"Conventional thought rarely yields surprises," says Best. "This underrated vegetable suffers from a lack of endeavour and imagination in most kitchens. Steamed or stir-fried seems to be its common fate. Most things can be improved with time in a hot oven, some fat and the correct seasoning. Broccoli benefits more than most, with the oven releasing its umami potential."

Serves 4 (pictured p139)

- 2 heads broccoli
- 50 ml extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ tsp dried chilli flakes
- Finely grated rind and juice of ½ lemon

- 1** Peel the skin from the broccoli stems and cut the broccoli heads lengthways into quarters.
- 2** Preheat the oven to 180C fan-forced. Put the broccoli in a heavy baking dish and splash the olive oil over. Season with the chilli, freshly ground black pepper and Murray River pink salt to taste. Bake for 15-20 minutes until the broccoli is golden brown.
- 3** Just before serving, add the lemon zest and a good squeeze of the juice.

Risotto Milanese

"Risotto is one of those traditional dishes so surrounded by rules and lore that it's hard for any two people to agree on what is 'correct'," says Best. "These are the basic criteria for a good risotto and in no particular order of importance: the correct rice, the correct pan, the correct base recipe, the correct toasting of the rice, the correct way to stir, the correct degree of patience, whether to add fat at the end or not, and when it is ready it should create a 'wave' (how big this wave is, is a matter of dispute). This is one version and it's good and delicious and some people would agree. As the Romans would say, 'De gustibus non est disputandum (in matters of taste, there can be no disputes).'"

Serves 6

- 2 litres (8 cups) beef broth
- 100 gm bone marrow
- 3 golden shallots, finely chopped
- 240 gm carnaroli rice
- 40 saffron threads
- 100 ml dry white wine
- 3 tbsp grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
- 20 gm (¾ oz) butter
- 1 tsp freshly ground white pepper

- 1** Heat the broth in a saucepan over medium heat. Set aside and keep warm.
- 2** Heat the bone marrow in a 4-litre (16-cup) saucepan over medium heat until it melts. Add the shallot and cook, stirring, until softened (about 3 minutes). Add the rice and cook for 2 minutes to toast it. Add the saffron, then the wine. Cook until the wine has reduced and evaporated. Add 1 tsp sea salt, then add the reserved stock 125ml (½ cup) at a time, stirring until each addition is absorbed before adding another. Cook, stirring often, until the rice is tender and creamy (20-22 minutes). Stir in the Parmigiano-Reggiano, butter and white pepper and adjust the salt if necessary.>

Tomato soup



Tomato soup

"This is a dish to make in full summer when tomatoes are abundant, cheap and very ripe," says Best. "You can make it with tinned tomatoes or passata, but you may be in gross danger of missing the point. Grow your own, visit the markets, cook. Get out of the supermarket cycle. No one is so 'time poor' that they can't find time to cook a simple soup. The process delivers far more than the sum of its ingredients. It is good for the soul."

Serves 6

- 1 onion, coarsely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 100 ml olive oil
- ¼ tsp dried chilli flakes
- 1 kg ripe cooking tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- 2 thyme sprigs
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 basil leaves
- 1 marjoram sprig
- 1 oregano sprig

- 1 tsp raw (demerara) sugar
- ¼ tsp ground star anise
- ½ tsp freshly ground white pepper
- 3 tsp potato starch

- 1** In a large saucepan over medium-high heat, sauté the onion and garlic in the olive oil until lightly golden. Add the chilli, cook a little more, then add the tomatoes.
- 2** Tie the herbs into a small bundle with butcher's string and then add them to the pan. Add 2 tsp sea salt, sugar, star anise and pepper. Stir well and cover the pan with a lid. Cook on a low simmer for 1½ hours.
- 3** Remove the herbs. Leave the soup to cool, then blend it to a fine purée with a hand-held blender. Using the back of a ladle, press the soup through a very fine sieve into a clean saucepan over medium heat.
- 4** Mix the potato starch with 2 tbsp water to a slurry and add to the soup. Stir the soup until it thickens. Adjust the seasoning if required.

Roast lamb leg in chamomile

"When designing dishes or looking for inspiration, it is most helpful to look at the natural environment of the main ingredient," says Best. "More often than not it is nature that will suggest the best partner. Is it mere coincidence that the classic pairing of tomato and basil are also friends in the garden? In companion planting, basil is used as a natural pest-repellent to protect the ripening tomato. In the garden of the ocean, fish and seaweed are synonymous. If there is any better accompaniment for white-fleshed fish than seaweed butter I'm yet to find it. So it is with lamb. I imagined the wee beast frolicking in the sun with zephyrs rushing through the spring grass and little white heads of chamomile nodding in agreement. Gee, they taste good together."

Serves 4 (plus leftovers for sandwiches)

- 1.2 kg suckling lamb leg (long leg, rump on; see note)
- 1 garlic bulb, cloves separated and peeled
- 50 ml olive oil
- 50 gm best-quality chamomile tea
- 2 onions, roots removed, cut into quarters
- Splash of white wine for deglazing
- Small bunch of fresh chamomile

- 1** Remove the lamb from the refrigerator 1 hour before preparation to allow more even cooking. Preheat the oven to 180C.
- 2** Evenly score the skin of the lamb to a depth of 5mm and rub 2 tsp sea salt all over the meat.
- 3** In a food processor, blend the garlic and olive oil to a paste, then rub this all over the lamb. Sprinkle the chamomile tea leaves over the lamb.
- 4** Heat a heavy roasting pan in the oven until hot. Put the lamb and onion in the pan and cook for 1½ hours (25-30 minutes per 500gm), basting the meat with its fat from time to time. Cook the lamb to your preferred temperature (I prefer medium, 65C-70C, for the best flavour and texture). Remove the meat from the oven to rest for 20-30 minutes before serving.
- 5** Tip off some of the fat and deglaze the pan with a splash of white wine. Reduce the wine to nothing, then add a little water. Bring to the boil, scraping the pan with a wooden spoon to make a jus, and pour it over the sliced lamb to serve. Garnish with the fresh chamomile flowers and carve the lamb at the table.

Note You may need to order the lamb ahead from the butcher. ●

✦ Best Kitchen Basics by Mark Best (Hardie Grant Books, hbk, \$59.99) is available in stores nationally 1 March and on cooking.com.au. This extract has been reproduced with minor GT style changes.



Roast lamb leg
in chamomile



AN AUSTRALIAN GOURMET TRAVELLER PROMOTION

Autumn at Jonah's

Escape to Jonah's at Whale Beach for superb dining and dazzling sea views.

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Dine at Jonah's award-winning restaurant and enjoy the superb contemporary Australian menu created by executive chef Logan Campbell. Using the finest local produce and Australian seafood, Logan delivers the likes of beetroot-cured kingfish with coconut yoghurt and finger lime, and duck breast with date purée, all brimming with flavour. The menu is matched with a magnificent wine list (awarded Best Hotel Restaurant Wine list by *Gourmet Traveller WINE* in 2015) of more than 1500 different wines from around the globe, with a cellar of over 5000 bottles. Make the most of it and stay overnight in one of the 11 stylish Ocean Retreat rooms with unparalleled 180-degree sea views.



Clockwise from top: Jonah's Restaurant; an Ocean Retreat room; Macleay Valley suckling pig; fruits de mer for two.



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MARCH 2016

travel

From bar-hopping in the Basque Country to basking anew in the Greek sun.

Our man in San Sebastián It was love at first sight for Gerald Diffey, of Melbourne bar Gerald's, when he first visited the Basque Country's famed resort town. Here he opens the door to his adopted home.

Mountain highs With a cashmere rug and mug of hot chocolate, Eliza O'Hare settles into an armchair adventure through the Canadian Rockies.

Let's go Greek, endaxi? Value for money and improved service are driving Greece's tourism-led recovery.

CALLED TO THE BAR

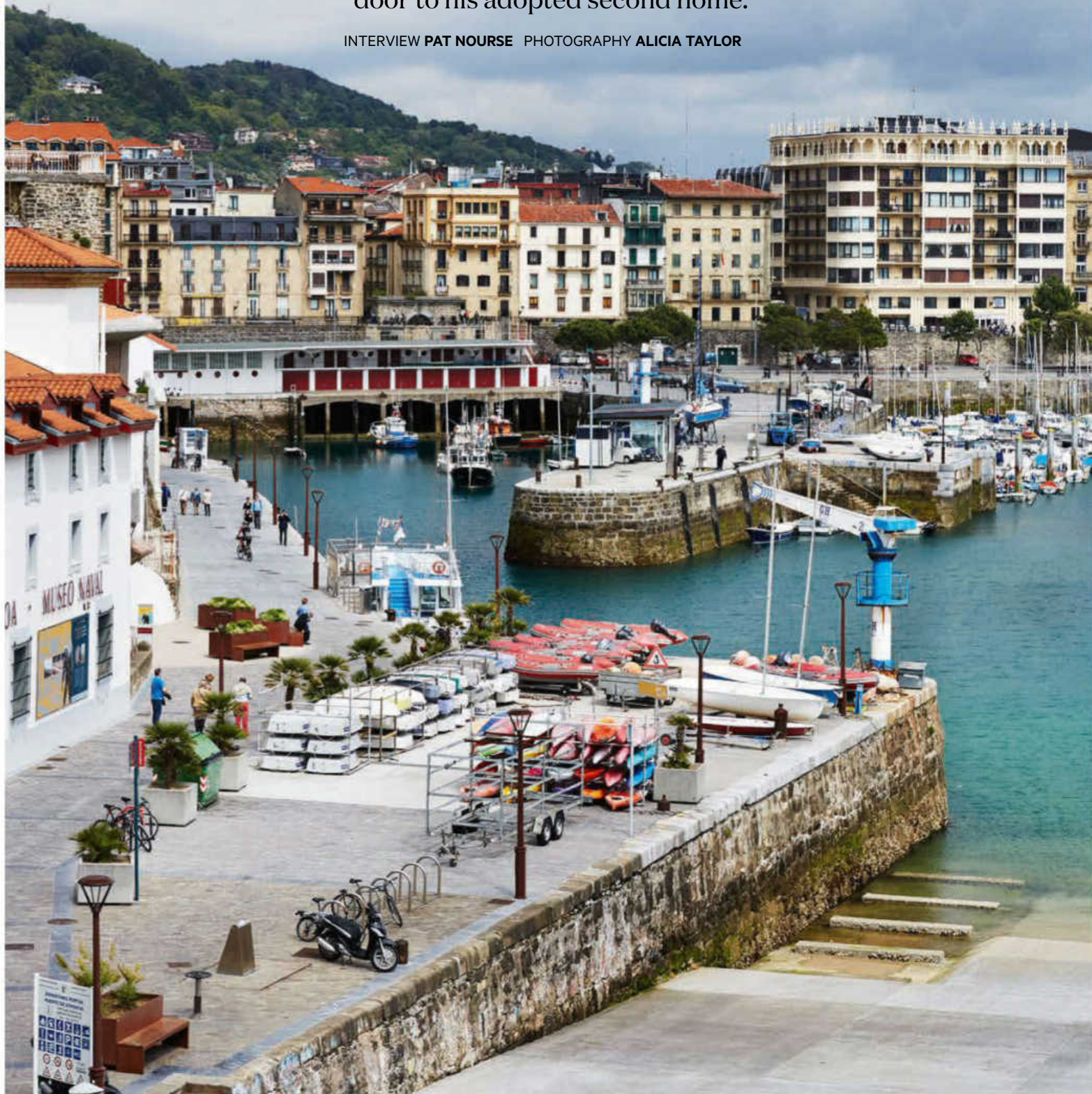
Gerald Diffey at his bar in San Sebastián.
Opposite: the city's harbour, La Concha.



OUR **MAN** IN San Sebastián

It was love at first sight for *Gerald Diffey*, of acclaimed Melbourne bar Gerald's, when he first visited the Basque Country's famed resort town. Here he opens the door to his adopted second home.

INTERVIEW **PAT NOURSE** PHOTOGRAPHY **ALICIA TAYLOR**





I first came to San Sebastián by accident. It was six years ago, and my flight was delayed leaving Europe because of the volcanic eruption in Iceland. We ended up with a few days spare at the end of the trip, and just headed up from Barcelona for a lark. As soon as I arrived, though, I thought, “I have to spend more time here.” I was struck by the fact that it’s a small town but it has everything – the beaches, the architecture, culture, art, music, great bars and extraordinary food.

The Basques are both inward-looking and very international at the same time. You’ve got wild architecture and art like the Kursaal and the Chillida sculptures next to very traditional buildings and work. It’s the same with the food – there’s these proud, unbroken traditions of fishing, foraging, farming, wine and cheese and very traditional old restaurants and bars coexisting with a concentration of some of the most modern cooking in the world. They sit next to each other very comfortably here.

You can get intimate with San Sebastián quite quickly. With Madrid or even Barcelona, you don’t really get under the skin of the city that readily, but here you can immerse yourself in the culture. The Basques have an identity that is so strong and powerful and so seductive – they keep their traditions alive in a way that, in England, say, would’ve died out 150 years ago. They hold culture in the palm of their hands. It’s their most important treasure. The spoken word, sculpture and film are very important here. Defining identity is an ongoing, important project for the people of San Sebastián, young or old. And food is very much part of that.

Our neighbourhood, Gros, which is just over the river from the Old Town, fronting the surf beach, is

having a moment. There’s a lot of new operators; we’re here, there’s The Loaf, which is very good, and this northern summer some guys from Mugaritz are opening up just a block or two away. Gros is the Brooklyn of San Sebastián. Or possibly the Carlton. It’s got a funky liveliness to it; it’s where the mojo is happening.

I think 2016 is a particularly good year to visit, too – in addition to the film festival, the jazz festival and the surf film festival, the city’s been named a European Capital of Culture for 2016, which means there are events on in the arts every day of the year, and the *New York Times* just put it on its list of the most essential places for travellers in 2016.

I like that the place could be full of surf dudes, but then you look across the room and you’ve got elderly aristocratic French people coming down to take the air for the week, and they mix in the same bars and the same space, and that’s a wonderful melting pot. Everyone’s here because it’s cool, and I want to be a part of that.

My decision to open a bar here last year, along with my partner from Gerald’s in Melbourne, Mario Di Ienno, and our partner in San Sebastián, Carlos Belío, was largely based on the idea that I just want to be in this city every year for the rest of my life. I want to cook and source wine and have a place in their world, and they’ve welcomed us, just as you’ll be welcomed at the places here.

TRES AMIGOS

Clockwise from top left: Gerald Diffey (left), Mario Di Ienno and Carlos Belío; milk-fed lamb at Gerald’s Bar; San Sebastián harbour.

EAT AND DRINK

GERALD'S BAR

Gerald's, our bar in Melbourne, is all about discovering new, interesting wines, and eating at any level that you feel comfortable with, whether that's just a snack or a feast. At heart it's a wine bar with food and great music. You'll hear a lot of ska, soul, funk and R&B records: Jackie Mittoo, Marlena Shaw, Gil Scott-Heron, a lot of straight-ahead jazz – Miles Davis and John Coltrane – as well as a bit of Siouxsie and the Banshees thrown in. In other words, all the things I like. An eclectic mix of passionate music. And that's what we've brought to San Sebastián, only with more food, and in the summer season we also open through the day. We're one of the only bars in San Sebastián that makes its coffee with real milk rather than UHT, too, so we've become a bit of a hub for travellers in that regard. We're in Gros, which has very much a locals' vibe, but it's also an area where visitors like to call in regularly to get the lay of the land.

We didn't want to copy what San Sebastián already does, so we don't do pintxos, the local take on tapas – they do plenty of that and they do it well – we just wanted to use the fantastic local produce and put our own spin on it. I don't know how to describe our cuisine except to say we go to the market, we look at nice things and we make them into food. We're playing with some classics, like our steak tartare, and Nick Hughes, our chef, does things like make beautiful fresh rag pasta and tosses it with porcini from up in the hills here, some fried and left in pieces, others turned into a light purée. He also does a lovely prawn rillettes, which we serve with toast, and when we can get them he does the same thing with fresh anchovies. It doesn't get much better than fresh Basque anchovies and wine. *Iparragirre 13, Gros, +34 94 308 3001, gerald sbar.eu*



BORDA BERRI

It looks like a classic pintxo bar – a small, brightly lit, stand-up space – except there's no pintxos on the bar. The food is inventive, it's all cooked to order and it gets really rammed when they're busy. The house specialty is raciones – dishes roughly the size of a bread and butter plate – and they're served with cutlery, where a pintxo would normally be something you'd eat with your hands. They do a good pig's ear with chimichurri (or, as they call it, tximitxurri), an outstanding raviolo of wild mushrooms on mushroom sauce, and they're also very well known for their veal cheek. They cook it in a mirepoix with Pedro Ximénez for hours, then they blitz that mirepoix into a sauce and pour it on top. These guys' small plates might well be the best quality in the Old Town. *Calle Fermin Calbeton 12, +34 94 343 0342*

ATARI

This is one of the few bars in the Old Town that has a large area outside with tables and chairs. It's opposite the cathedral in a little plaza, and there really aren't that many plazas in San Sebastián, so it's just a great place for hanging>



BAY OF PLENTY

From top left: the Old Town; inside Gerald's Bar; Borda Berri exterior and its veal cheek in red wine with bomba rice; Gerald Diffey at the San Martín meat market counter.



PRESS PLAY For the sounds of Gerald's Bar, get the playlist at gourmettraveller.com.au/playlists



out and people-watching. Some people take issue with the attitude of the staff, and think they're a bit jaded, but honestly, they're so busy, and they put out a very good product and it's a delightful spot. The octopus is the thing here – a classic octopus and potatoes. At Gerald's we confit our octopus first; Atari's seems to just be grilled, but it's beautifully tender, so I think it just comes down to quality octopus. Their pintxos off the bar are also reliable. They'll just be things like jamón on bread, but it'll be good jamón and a good piece of bread. It's a cut above. *Calle Mayor 18, +34 94 344 0792*

LA CUCHARA DE SAN TELMO

The secret here is that these guys get their plancha, the hotplate, really, really hot. Their foie gras is something of a signature, and the

thing that sets it apart is the way they manage to get a really nice crust on it when they sear it, leaving it gooey inside. Delicious. The salt cod is also really something. They do it simply, with a green sauce but again their plancha being really hot makes all the difference, and they get a nice caramelisation on it. They don't rinse the cod too much, so it's still got a nice saltiness, but it's not too salty. A lot of the salt cod in San Sebastián will taste very salty to Australian palates, but these guys nail the balance. *Calle del Treinta y Uno de Agosto 28, lacucharadesantelmo.com*

BAR NESTOR

Nestor is one of those classic, old-school places that has two things on the menu that everyone orders. It's famous for its tortilla, of course, but you could spend a month in San Sebastián arguing about who's got the best tortilla; Nestor is definitely on the list, but

I reckon the one we serve at Gerald's is right up there as well. Anyway, I always get the chuleta and the tomato salad – they do both really well. The chuleta is a rib-eye cut thick, generally weighing in at around 1.2 kilos. All the good bars in San Sebastián go to great pains with the sourcing of their beef, and the reputation for quality at Nestor is well deserved. It's done on a hot char-grill and served rare – really rare – crisp on the outside, covered in chunks of salt, with pink, delicious beef on the inside. They have a really good selection of Rioja wines, too – crianzas and reservas. One of the things that distinguishes Nestor (apart from the fact it's run by these very happy, funny old Basque guys who seem to revel in their work) is that you can get a decent bottle of Rioja with your big steak and a great salad of just beefsteak tomatoes, oil and salt. You stand in the street eating and drinking, and it's an experience. *Calle Pescaderia 11, +34 94 342 4873*

A FUEGO NEGRO

These guys have been here a while, and their menu doesn't change much, but the dial is fixed firmly towards the molecular – green olives filled with sweet vermouth jelly served in clear plastic egg cartons, things in shot glasses, savoury ice-creams – and they've got a look to match, with plenty of neon and bold graphics. The thing you want is the Mackobe. The name



is a fairly weak play on "Kobe beef" and "McDonalds", and it's just a Basque take on a miniature wagyu hamburger at heart, but it's a pretty good bit of ballast on a bar-hop. Two bites and you're done. And they play really good music. *Calle 31 de Agosto, +34 65 013 5373, afuegonegro.com*

GANDARIAS

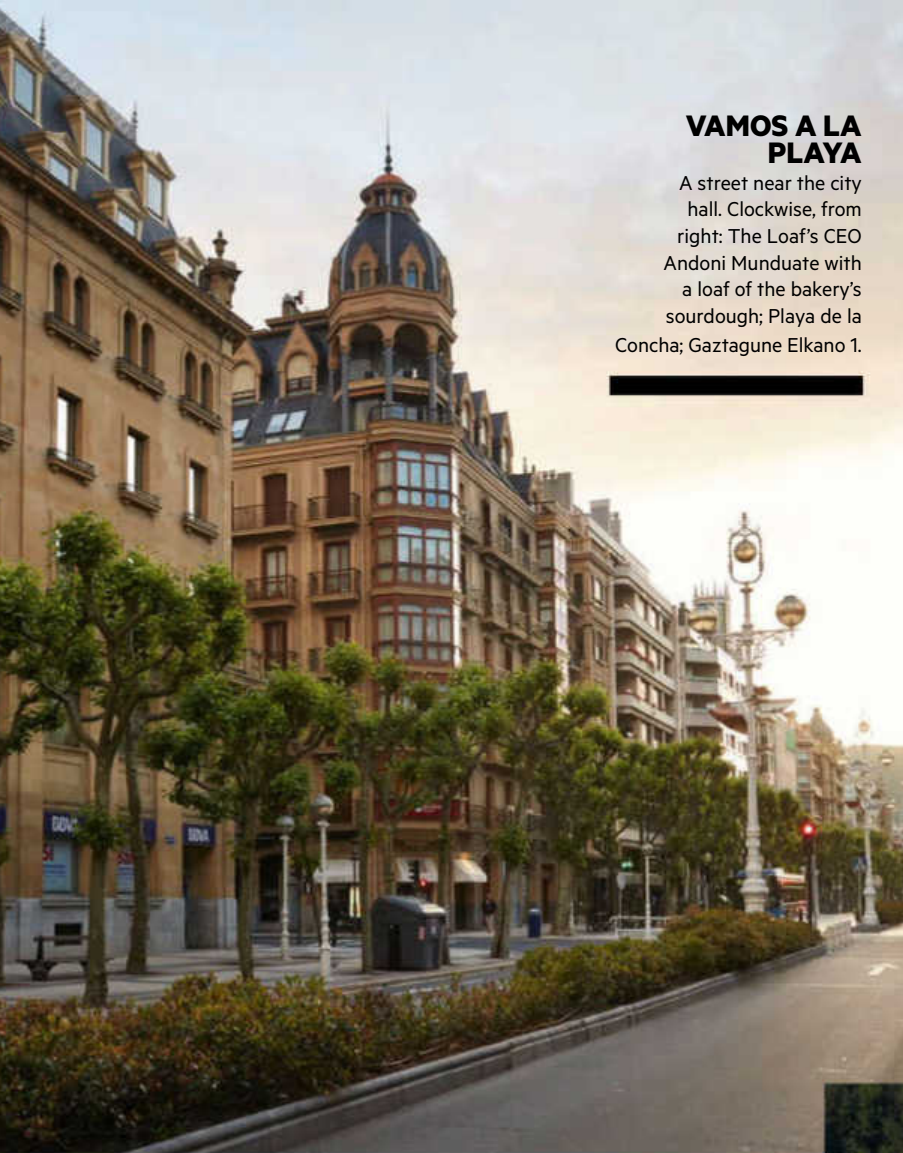
A pintxos bar, yes, but Gandarias also has a good sit-down restaurant, and after a few days of standing up in bars everywhere, you're grateful for a seat. And they serve the full dinner menu at 11 o'clock at night. They specialise in the classics – chuleta, crab, and their salt cod is good, too – but the nice thing about it is you can take your time and chill out and eat. In San Sebastián a lot of the places serve pretty much the same things, but it's a matter of knowing what to have where. The other thing about San Sebastián restaurants is that they're all protein-driven: you eat vegetables at home. Finding a salad that's just a salad can be difficult. Gandarias has good product across the board. Their jamón is exceptional, and>

Defining identity is an *ongoing, important project* for the people of San Sebastián, young or old. And food is very much part of that.



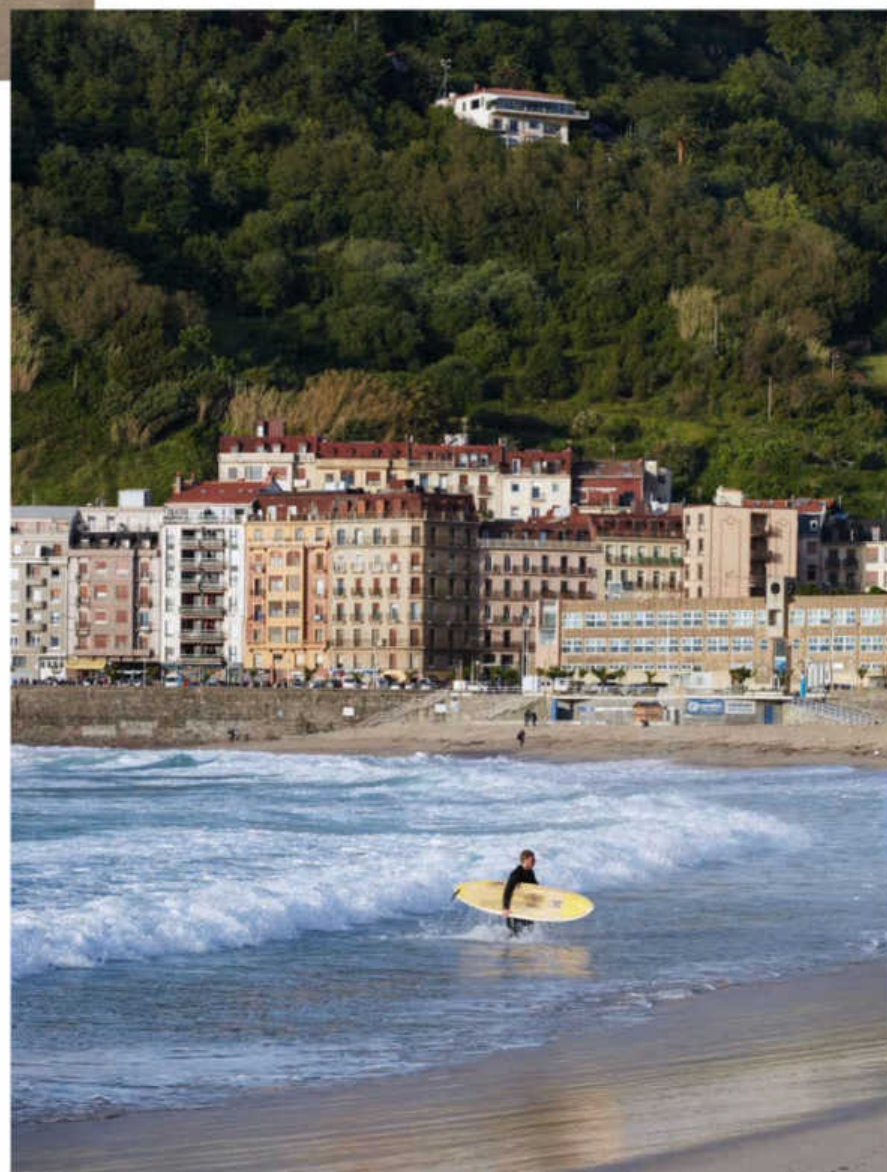
BASQUE GLORY

San Sebastián's city hall. Opposite, clockwise from top left: Bar Nestor's chuleta ready for the grill; A Fuego Negro; La Cuchara de San Telmo; Gandarias; A Fuego Negro's "Mackobe with txips" and its interior.



VAMOS A LA PLAYA

A street near the city hall. Clockwise, from right: The Loaf's CEO Andoni Munduate with a loaf of the bakery's sourdough; Playa de la Concha; Gaztagune Elkano 1.



they have an excellent wine list; they've got wines with some real age on them. If you want to drink one great Rioja while you're in town, and pay a reasonable amount of money for it, this is a fine place to do so. *Calle 31 de Agosto 23, +34 94 342 6362, restaurantegandarias.com*

PACO BUENO

This is a stand-up pintxos bar run by the sons of a famous Basque boxer, Paco Bueno, and it's hung with pictures of him and his various opponents back in the day. They do fried prawns on sticks, gambas en gabardina, that's almost like tempura, and for two prawns on a stick you'll pay 1.50 euro or something ridiculous like that. I can't walk past it without ordering some. They bring out hot prawns fresh every 10 minutes the whole time they're open, and you just bash two or three little beers or white wines, and walk out happy. It's a wonderful thing. Forget going to the chip shop for a dimmie – go to Paco Bueno and have a prawn. *Calle Mayor 6, +34 94 342 4495*

GAZTAGUNE ELKANO 1

This shop is run by a local cheesemaker who's in business with an Italian expat, so there's a nice blend here of beautifully handmade local cheeses and some of the softer varieties of cheese from just across the border in France, and he's got the best Parmigiano-Reggiano he can find in Italy. The joy of the shop is mostly the sheep's milk semi-hard cheeses that he makes himself. They're phenomenal delights. And if you want to try any of the other cheeses that the Basque country is known for, they're all here. It's the Neal's Yard Dairy of San Sebastián – everything chosen with care, everything in peak condition. *Calle Elkano 1, elkano1.com*

THE LOAF

These guys opened their bakery maybe six months before Gerald's Bar opened last year, so we're both relatively new additions to

our neighbourhood in Gros. I like it because they've got the most modern of bread-making equipment to make the most traditional sourdough, and they're doing it really well. The backbone of the business is crusty, beautiful loaves, but they're also passionate about their coffee, with a barista there full-time, and there's also a little bistro downstairs doing full meals. The same people did a pop-up a few years ago with Dan Lepard [the acclaimed Australian-born, London-based baker], and he's been instrumental in encouraging them in their approach to modern baking. It's a great place. *Zurriola Hiribidea 18, +34 94 326 5030, theloaf.es*

AKERBELTZ

Akerbeltz is a little underground dive bar that plays great music. It's got a small terrace overlooking the port, which I think is one of the nicest places to drink outside in San Sebastián, and they've got a very strong list of craft beers, something like 30 of them now, many of them local. The music is soul, rock and roll and a bit of ska – in other words, the music I like. *Calle Mari 19, +34 94 345 1452*

DRY BAR

This is the fanciest cocktail bar in town, a place where you can drink Belle Époque by the glass,

or count on getting a very well-made Martini. It has that old hotel-bar charm. The styling is modern, but it's very traditional in its delivery, which I like. It's not about mixology; it's about classicism, harking back to an era of elegance and panache. *Hotel Maria Cristina, Paseo Republica Argentina 4, +34 94 343 7600, dry-sansebastián.com>*



BAY WATCH

Akerbeltz bar (plus top and above); Dry Bar (above right); empanadillas de atún and gambas en gabardina at Paco Bueno (left).





OUT OF TOWN

CASA CÁMARA

This is a magical place. I think it was in 1884 that one of the owner's ancestors set the place up. I'd say she's the other side of 75, and runs it with her daughter, but she's still very hands-on and going strong. It's on the outskirts of San Sebastián in Pasajes San Juan, or Pasaia, a little 16th-century town on a harbour. You cross the water in a small boat that takes you from San Pedro to San Juan in about a minute. It's unique – one of the great seafood restaurants of the world. The building sits right on the waterfront, and its basement floods twice a day with the tide, so the owners use it to store their live seafood, which they bring up in a cage into the dining room with a pulley. When you're sitting at the table and you see someone haul your live lobsters, crabs or crayfish dripping with sea water out of the basement, you know you're in for something special. The cooking is



very simple but they know what they're doing. You won't eat a better lobster anywhere. Order the parrillada – a platter of grilled seafood, usually with some razor clams, langoustines, tiny crabs and red prawns in the mix. For people from Australia who rarely see a plate of seafood of that quality, for 37 euros, you're saying to yourself "this would be 200 euros if I could get it in Australia, and I can't". And all their seafood dishes are great, the simple magic of the plancha with garlic, salt and olive oil. *Calle San Juan 79, Pasai Donibane, +34 94 352 3699*

ESTEBENEA

Estebenea, which my children like to call Gloria Estefan, is a little way out of town, but absolutely worth the effort. It's near Irun, on the French border, and it's about half an hour in a cab, which will cost you about 20 euros, so get a gang together to do it properly. It's a traditional country family restaurant on a stream, and you sit in the shade of big trees and drink from an interesting wine list – not big, but savvy – with some cool beers as well. The food is hearty – roast chicken, or codillo, for instance, where a whole ham hock is boiled and then roasted and becomes beautiful hammy goodness. You may not be surprised to learn they also do a chuleta, but it's one of the very good ones, a very big steak you order to share that comes out on a bed of fried

potatoes. It's the perfect place to escape a hot day – all locals, very relaxed, just a nice hang. *Barrio Olaberria 51, Irun, +34 94 362 1962, estebenea.com*

SHOP

BELTZA RECORDS

Beltza means "black" in Basque, and the owner of this store specialises, if you like, in black music: soul, funk, reggae. He has a wide variety of pretty much everything, but he specialises in good R&B and rock and roll. All the good stuff. It's just a kooky little place where you can crate-dig to your heart's content. You're more than likely to see Beltza vinyl at Gerald's, too. *Calle San Juan 9, +34 94 343 0669, beltzarecords.com*

COOK

SAN SEBASTIÁN FOOD

This cooking school, attached to the Maria Cristina hotel, opened last year and it's very well done. The equipment and the stations where you work are all immaculate, new and beautiful, and the classes are well-designed and multilingual. If you wanted to get deeper into Basque food culture, and get your hands dirty with a cooking experience, this is where you'd go. *Calle Okendo 1, +34 94 342 1143, sansebastiánfood.com*

COUNTRY CLASSICS

Clockwise, from far left: Estebenea; the haul at Casa Cámara; chuleta at Estebenea; Hotel Maria Cristina; a cooking class at San Sebastián Food. Opposite: the boat to Pasajes San Juan.



STAY

HOTEL MARIA CRISTINA

Ostentatious, expensive – pretty much what you'd expect of the high end of town in a European beach resort. The bar is excellent. And the beds! They're some of the most comfortable beds I've ever slept in. The rooms are beautiful, the service is grand. It's opulent, it's flash, it does what it says on the tin. *Paseo Republica Argentina 4, +34 94 343 7600, hotel-mariacristina.com* ●

THE FINE PRINT

GETTING THERE

From select Australian cities, **Qantas, Emirates, Etihad and Qatar Airways** fly one stop to both Madrid and to Barcelona; **Singapore Airlines** flies one stop to Barcelona. **Vueling Airlines** and **Iberia** operate short flights from both cities to San Sebastián; there are also regular trains from Madrid (about six hours), Barcelona (six hours) and buses from Bilbao (an hour).





MOUNTAIN highs

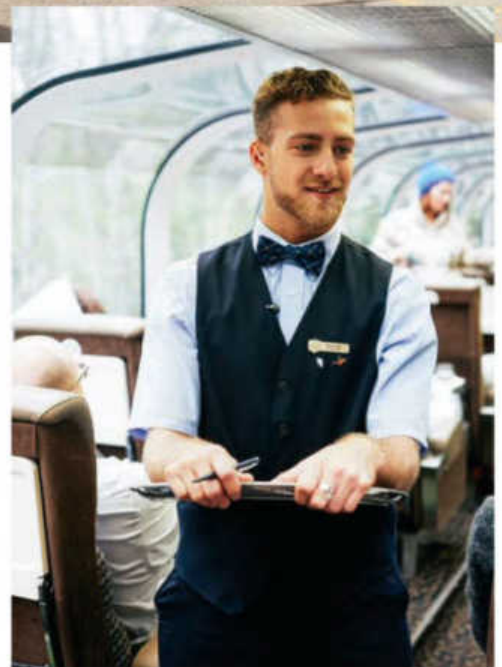
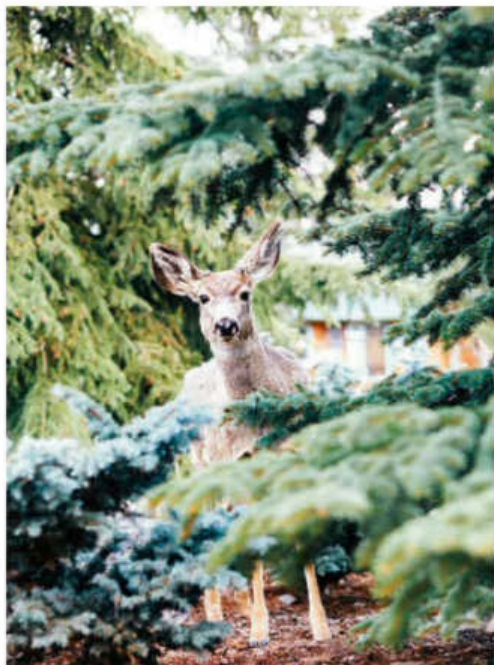
With a cashmere rug and mug of hot chocolate,
Eliza O'Hare settles into an armchair
adventure through the Canadian Rockies.

PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS CHEN

PEAK PRACTICE

Mount Rundle, Cascade
Mountain and Castle
Mountain seen from the
Fairmont Banff Springs hotel.





W

We arrive in Vancouver at just the right time. It's the annual 420 marijuana festival, which has drawn a smoky crowd of about 20,000 pot lovers to the very pretty, usually very proper city square beside our hotel – the landmark Fairmont Hotel Vancouver. The rally, where the authorities turn a blind eye to proceedings, offers a glimpse of the legendarily rebellious Canadian spirit.

It's also the opening of the *Rocky Mountaineer* season, and we're here not to light up but to embark on one of the world's great train journeys.

Our trip through the Canadian Rockies will take us from Vancouver north-east to Jasper, with an add-on bus ride to the national park resort town of Banff. Named "Journey through the Clouds", this is the company's flagship, 900-kilometre route through the prairies of Kamloops and the snow-capped peaks of Jasper. It's one of four *Mountaineer* routes crisscrossing the Rockies, traversed on foot more than a hundred years ago by settlers making their way to the Cariboo goldfields.

It's quite a scene at 6.30am at the Rocky Mountaineer Station in suburban Vancouver. The terminal has been renovated but retains the historic charm and features of a locomotive maintenance centre, with soaring ceilings and a wall of windows that frame the impressive *Rocky Mountaineer* train

waiting on the tracks outside. It stretches as far as the eye can see. It would take 15 minutes at a trot to reach the last of 13 cars, but ours is just steps from the terminal.

A cheerful hostess shows me to my seat in Gold Leaf, the more upmarket of the *Mountaineer's* two cabin classes, and I settle in with a glass of something cold, sparkling and Canadian. The double-deck carriages are spacious, the reclining seats wide and comfortable, with generous-sized tray tables and cashmere blankets tucked into the front pockets. Each carriage comprises a kitchen, dining room, lounge, toilets and open-air viewing compartment on the lower deck, and seats on the upper deck. The highlight is the glass dome atop the upper deck, delivering 180-degree views and requiring craning passengers to wear sunscreen and hats on sunny days.

Rail yards and warehouses give way to leafy suburbia and the imposing British Columbia Penitentiary, accompanied by a running commentary from our host, Bernardo Bamberg, whose knowledge of local history is astounding, not least since he's Brazilian. Already the gentle rocking motion has lulled me into a calm state, ready for breakfast.

The dining room has window tables for four, set with crisp white linen, custom-made cutlery and native prairie flowers. We choose our seats, and none of us deviates from our place for the rest of the journey. The breakfast menu sets the tone for the rest of the trip: hearty, simple fare with an emphasis on local

ROOM WITH A VIEW

Opposite, clockwise from top left: the *Rocky Mountaineer's* glass-domed upper deck; deer spotted in Jasper; the train carriage; host Bernardo Bamberg; dining on board; elk in Jasper; seared albacore tuna; Pyramid Creek Falls. Below: en route from Vancouver to Kamloops.





OFF PISTE

From top: Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge heated pool and (below) its Emerald Lounge; Rocky Mountaineer executive chef Jean Pierre Guerin; skiing at Lake Louise.

produce. My breakfast choice is an “explorer’s omelette” – a cheesy extravaganza with all the trappings: sausage, mushrooms, tomato, country-style potatoes and crisp double-smoked bacon.

Executive chef Jean Pierre Guerin, who has headed kitchens in hotels in Vancouver and Hong Kong and a number of airlines, understands food preparation in confined spaces. His custom-built kitchen is just two metres wide, and in full steam when I meet him.

“The key is organisation and storage,” he says, as nine chefs prep and plate around him. “It’s like cooking on a private plane – no open flames.”

There can be up to 10 kitchens and 50 chefs on these trains, turning out all-day meals and snacks for 41 passenger cars. Highlights on this trip include seared albacore tuna and roasted British Columbia salmon with fennel and roast potato salad. But it’s the wine list that really impresses. All the wines are Canadian and the whites are particularly good – the Jackson-Triggs sauvignon blanc, for instance – available over lunch and in our seats all afternoon.

By lunch on our first day we’re deep in the prairies, vast lowland meadows usually awash with wildflowers. We’re here early in the season before the flowers bloom, so instead there’s a sea of swaying

grasses. With a glass of Sumac Ridge chardonnay in hand, we settle into the ultimate armchair adventure, passing elk and eagles, cargo trains and logging towns, osprey and bison. Our maximum speed is about 50 kilometres per hour, which means there’s plenty of opportunity for marvelling.

The history, too, is fascinating and Bamberg launches into tales of courage and tragedy endured by the Overlanders, the pioneers who settled this northern part of Canada. In 1862, a group of 150 settlers set off from Ontario on foot with packhorses, aiming to cross the Canadian Rockies and reach the Cariboo goldfields. The families dragged themselves on gruelling, freezing journeys blighted by bears and wolves. As we pass treacherous rapids and breathtaking rocky outcrops, we hear tales of grim places such as Hell’s Gate, where pack mules and provisions were regularly lost over the edge of Jackass Mountain; and we cross rapids known as the Jaws of Death, the Witch’s Cauldron and, the most treacherous of all, the Mother-in-Law.

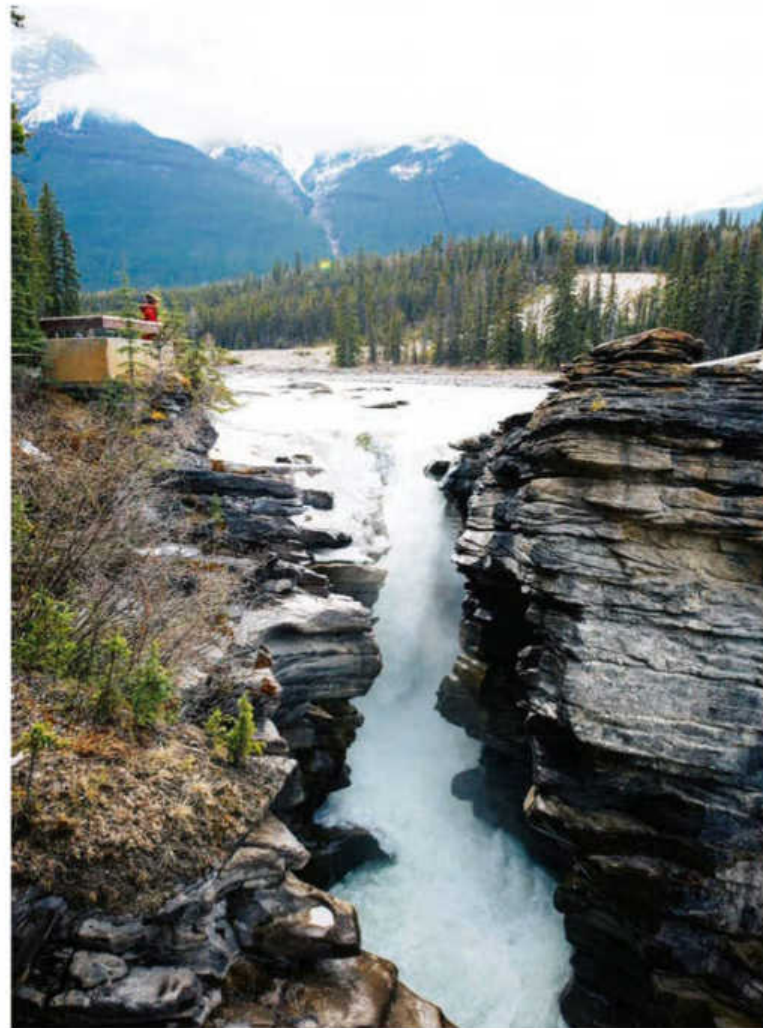
We spend our first night in the Sandman Signature Kamloops Hotel. Kamloops is a prairie town about 350 kilometres north-east of Vancouver; its emerging food culture sustains two weekly organic farmers’ markets and a couple of new brew houses. We arrive late after delays on the tracks – the *Mountaineer* is required to give way to freight trains – and at dusk we find our way to The Noble Pig Brewhouse in search of the house specialty, flash-fried pickled cucumbers. Locally grown and house pickled, the secret to their success is the Cajun-style breading and a dill ranch dip. They arrive with a flight of six house-made beers: a lager, a pale ale, a peppered ale, an amber, a porter, and, the standout, the malty Fascist Pig Pilsner. “We try to do as much as we can with as little as we can,” says Dustin McIntyre, owner and chief pickle-maker.

We pull out early next morning and leave the prairie behind, entering pine forests dotted with log cabins, and rolling past glacial rivers with pebbled bends made for trout fishing. If anyone sees a grizzly bear, a black bear, a moose or eagles, suggests Bamberg, they should shout so we can all catch a glimpse. And moments later comes word from the front of the carriage: “Bear on the left! Bear on the left!”

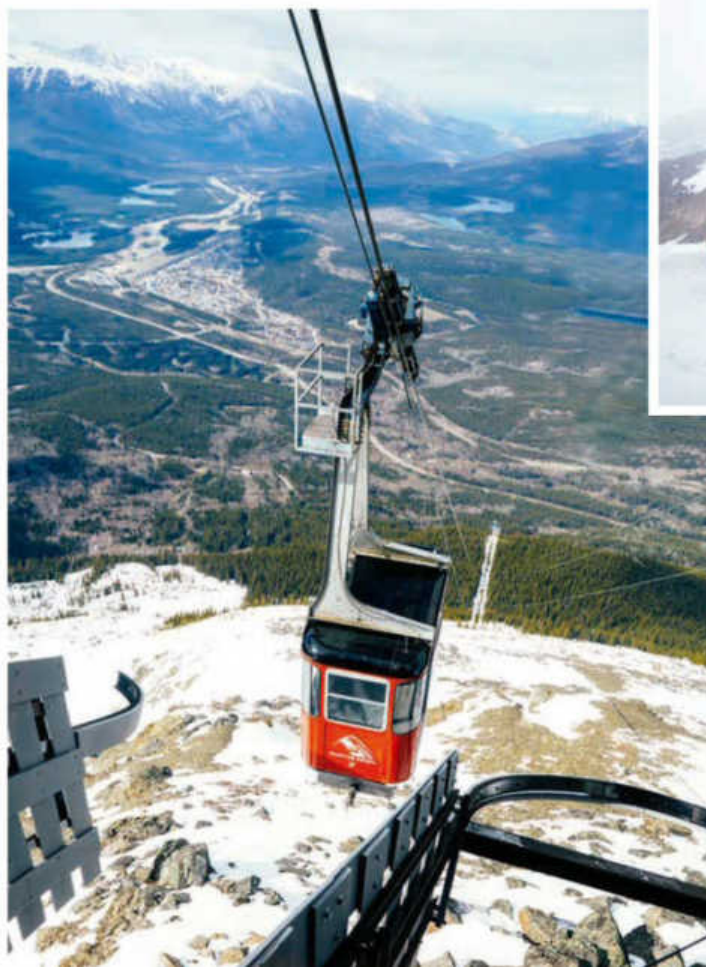
A phalanx of iPhones and cameras is pressed against glass, and while no one manages to capture an image, we’re thrilled to know there are bears out there. This prompts the standard bear safety lecture: don’t run, stand tall and back away slowly, and never, ever make eye contact. Bamberg confesses he broke all the rules during his only encounter, when he interrupted a bear scavenging in rubbish bins in a lane in Jasper. Both parties panicked – Bamberg turned and ran, jumped a fence and hid in a backyard, while the bear escaped in the opposite direction.>

RISE AND FALLS

Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge. Clockwise from right: Athabasca Falls in Jasper National Park; Athabasca Glacier; fried pickles at The Noble Pig Brewhouse, Kamloops; Jasper Skytram; Dustin McIntyre of The Noble Pig Brewhouse.



As we continue to follow the *winding path of rivers and rapids*, the mountain faces become more dramatically sheer and snow flurries drift by.





PEAK PERFORMANCE

From top: downtown Banff; Rundle Lounge at Fairmont Banff Springs; Bow River; the view from Fairmont Banff Springs. Opposite: Fairmont Banff Springs.

As we continue to follow the winding path of rivers and rapids, the mountain faces become more dramatically sheer and snow flurries drift by, triggering a rapid temperature dive. This prompts the appearance of cashmere rugs and hot chocolate with Baileys – the perfect way to roll between the Monashee and Cariboo mountains and glimpse majestic Mount Robson, the highest peak in the Canadian Rockies.

We're heading for the World Heritage-listed Jasper National Park in Alberta, and at its heart is our bed for the night: the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge, built in 1922 as a stopover for well-heeled adventurers seeking a genteel wilderness experience. Here we relax in deep lounges scattered with embroidered cushions featuring deer and elk, huge stag heads over stone fireplaces, and spectacular views of Lac Beauvert. The log walls are hung with framed photographs of illustrious visitors – the Queen Mother, Bing Crosby, and Marilyn Monroe among them.

The main lodge is a short, bracing walk from our room, past squirrels, gophers and a gang of cartoonish elk grazing on sweet spring grass. We've been warned it's calving season and to give them a wide berth. Elk cows swim across the lake in front of the lodge to a tiny island to give birth in safety, away from wolves and bears, whose presence is acknowledged in signs warning us not to deviate from the trails around the lodge.

Next morning we head by coach to the Athabasca Glacier via the Icefields Parkway. One of the world's great scenic drives, it stretches 232 kilometres past

glaciers, waterfalls and the extraordinarily bright waters of Peyto Lake. While waiting at a transfer station for our glacier snowcat, I order a bowl of poutine – a Québécois dish of hot chips tossed with cheese curds and topped with a rich gravy. It's hot, salty and carby – perfect glacier-exploring fuel.

The snowcat ride is a quite an experience, and is the only way to ascend to the massive carved plain of the Athabasca Glacier. The drivers are trained to read the snow, navigating safe passage around potential chasms that can swallow a snowcat. When we reach the centre of the glacier, we're engulfed by silence and a dazzling whiteness. Around us are 11 of the highest peaks in the Canadian Rockies. I'd like to linger but springtime here is still very cold, and our glacier walk is more a short, stiff stroll.

By the time we return to our coach and the Icefields Parkway, we're driving in a snow storm. Visibility is less than 20 metres, so the spectacular Big Hill and Saskatchewan River Crossing are obscured. "They're there," our bus driver tells us as he climbs out to scrape ice from the windscreen. "Just take my word for it."

We spend our final night in the Rockies in Banff. Three railway workers discovered hot springs in the area in 1883, and a spa resort town and railway soon followed. The destination's popularity convinced the Canadian Pacific Rail Company to invest in a handful of grand hotels. Today, Banff is a town for chic skiers in the snow season – it closes during the harshest months of winter – and dedicated summer hikers. The main street has a row of pretty château-style stores and bars; it's quiet during the day when most visitors are skiing, hiking or immersed in the hot springs. Here we splurge on all things maple – syrup, boiled lollies, toffee apples, candies of all kinds.

The town is dwarfed by Mount Rundle, Cascade Mountain and Castle Mountain and, at the far end, the Fairmont Banff Springs hotel – our final stop. More palace than hotel, it was built in 1888 in an ornate Scottish baronial style with 768 rooms, among them ballrooms and bars and restaurants, stone corridors and Gothic details. It bears a resemblance to the Overlook Hotel in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, which is thrilling and only adds to the romance. Any spookiness is outweighed by the hotel's welcoming atmosphere and sunny, comfortable rooms.

The beauty of the *Rocky Mountaineer* is the access it gives travellers to some of Canada's most impressive and rugged terrain, all while they recline in comfort. What stays with me most vividly are the stories of the Overlanders who embarked on this same journey, but on foot and in the winter. I know where I'd rather be. **61**

THE FINE PRINT

Rocky Mountaineer's two-night Journey through the Clouds

travels between Vancouver
and Jasper via Kamloops.
Travel in Gold Leaf class
costs from \$2,521, or in
Silver Leaf class from
\$1,863. Fares include a
night's accommodation

in Kamloops, hotel and
station transfers, and all
meals and drinks on board.
The entire fleet features
glass-domed carriages,
and the season runs from
late-April to mid-October.
There are four rail routes
and a range of add-on
packages, including
cruise and touring
options. 1800 821 531,
rockymountaineer.com



GREECE IS THE WORD

The picture-perfect village of Oia on the island of Santorini.



Let's go Greek, endaxi?

Despite Greece's financial crisis, value for money and improved service are making it a hot destination again. **Max Anderson** reports on the country's tourism-led recovery.

The Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, promised a "national rebirth" for his economically crippled nation when he marked the new year. Other observers from abroad were just as upbeat, though for different reasons. "Greece is the word for 2016" reported the *Daily Mirror* as new-year bookings from the UK to the Hellenic isles ran hot. "The question really is *why shouldn't you go?*" asked the Flight Centre Travel Group, based in Australia and one of the world's biggest travel agencies, when it predicted this year's hotspots.

Only eight months ago, news headlines were anything but upbeat – "Greece: Can't Pay, Won't Pay"; "Greece Closes Banks as ATMs Run Dry" – as the country endured two elections, a referendum, capital controls and a brush with bankruptcy and eurozone exit.

As four years of Greek economic crisis came to a head, it seemed inevitable that foreign tourists – the mainstay of an industry worth \$55.52 billion and nearly 18 per cent of GDP – would cancel or postpone travel.

Sure enough, tourist numbers were soon telling a story. Although not the story most observers expected.

The Greek Tourism Confederation posted a record low of 179,000 visitors arriving in the winter month of February 2014. But in the summer month of July 2015, just after the bank closures, the confederation announced a record high of 3.03 million tourist arrivals.

Even the Alternate Minister for Tourism, Elena Kountoura, seemed surprised when she announced in October there had been a turnaround that "exceeded our initial expectations". "In 2014 we had 22 million tourists and €13.5 billion revenue," she told Greek media. "2015 shows close to 26 million tourists and revenue to exceed €15 billion."

Observers are predicting 2016 will break new records. So what's happened?

"What plays out on the news and what's happening on the ground are two different stories," says Halina Kubica, managing director of the Sydney-based Greece and Mediterranean Travel Centre and a Greek travel specialist for 20 years. "There were

a couple of hard years in 2013 to 2014, but after all the drama, people have to holiday somewhere."

Kubica says her agency lost a few last-minute bookings during the capital-control crisis but most travellers were undeterred. "The demand became high, almost too high – in fact, in end-June and mid-September we were begging to get rooms on Mykonos and Santorini. There were no rooms. Absolutely nothing."

This apparent paradox can be partly attributed to the Greek travel industry's swift action in 2013-2014. When tourism took a hit, operators offered discounts to Greece's biggest markets in Germany, France and Britain. By mid-2015, just as the headlines were about to turn grim, Greece found itself not with a perfect storm, but a perfect summer; the bookings were in the bag.

**"In June and September we were
begging to get rooms on Mykonos and
Santorini. There were none. Absolutely nothing."**

When the banks began to limit cash in June, the government quickly reassured travellers there would be no limits on ATM withdrawals made by foreigners.

"[Australian] travellers were definitely not put off Greece despite the negative headlines," says Tom Walley, the head of leisure travel at Flight Centre. Indeed, Flight Centre predicts Greece will be one of 10 hotspots this year and with good reason – bookings in 2015 were up an astonishing 52 per cent on 2014. Walley says cheap international airfares have played a part in this: "We've seen some great airfares to Greece, particularly during early-bird season in September. Athens airfares were coming in as some of the best value, and the city remains a great-value entry point to Europe."

The crisis has also shaken up Greek operators, many of whom have improved service and value for money. "Once you're struggling, every client counts," says Kubica. "Service has improved amazingly. I was there in October and every restaurant was going

above and beyond. I went in a party of four to a restaurant serving modern Greek on Santorini and it cost €80 – which is about \$125. That's with all wine, beer and food. Where can you do that in Sydney?"

A recent ranking by online booking agent Trivago seems to bear out the claim that Greek operators have their act together. In its 2015 Mediterranean Island Reputation Ranking, based on 140 million international reviews of hotels, the Cycladic isle of Ios comes out top, with Hydra, Folegandros, Santorini, Mykonos, Naxos and Paros all scoring highly.

Despite the ongoing grim economic conditions, the Greek tourism industry has continued to invest both publicly and privately. Aegean Airlines, which acquired Olympic Air in 2013, is a star performer, with 14 new destinations, four new Airbus

A320s and 1.1 million seats being added to its service this year. Several luxury boutique hotels – including AthensWas near the Acropolis, and Sophia Suites in Santorini – have opened recently. Athens' Hellinikon development is still on the drawing board, but if investors realise their €2.1 billion vision, the old airport site will be turned into a marina, a kilometre-long city beach and one of the world's biggest parks.

The expectation of a record 2016 is also being driven by crisis, though beyond Greece's borders. The bombing of a Russian commercial flight leaving Sharm-el-Sheik in October and heightened terrorism fears following the January suicide bombing in Istanbul are likely to see some four million Russian and German tourists rethinking their traditional summer holiday retreats in Turkey and Egypt. Greece is certain to be considered a safer alternative.

Even in times of uncertainty, as Halina Kubica points out, people have to holiday somewhere. ●



Savour Sri Lanka: a culinary tour

Discover the charms of this exotic island nation with specialist chef and host Geoff Jansz.

Sri Lanka is a magical mix of pristine palm-fringed beaches, ancient architectural wonders, vibrant towns and a rich cuisine all of its own. Thanks to the diverse nationalities who have visited and traded with the island nation over the years, the cuisine is a melting pot of exotic flavours, from southern Indian to Dutch and Portuguese blended with the local traditions of the Tamil and Sinhalese.

Who better, then, to lead a tour of this fascinating and colourful country than Sri Lankan-born chef Geoff Jansz? In October he joins forces with tour specialists Abercrombie & Kent to lead a journey through Sri Lanka that promises to be a succession of highlights. Join this exclusive group (with a maximum of 24 guests) to discover the Cultural Triangle with its treasure trove of World Heritage sites such as Dambulla and its cave temples, the Minneriya National Park for game spotting, the spice gardens at Matale, and much more. Along the way, you'll meet and eat with locals, and Jansz will lead cooking classes on the likes of quintessential Sri Lankan curries and the traditional kiri bath.

For a truly enlightening cultural experience of Sri Lanka, this is an opportunity not to be missed.



LOCAL COLOUR

Top: Sri Lanka's unique stilt fishermen near Galle. Above: a visit to a tea plantation is just one highlight of this guided tour. Left: the Hammock Garden at Jetwing Lighthouse in the Dutch colonial town of Galle.

JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS

- An intimate group of no more than 24 people
- One-on-one interaction with your host and Abercrombie & Kent guides
- Exclusive culinary experiences
- Market visits, cooking demonstrations and food tastings
- Guided sightseeing of the Cultural Triangle, Kandy and the Dutch Galle Fort
- An in depth tea experience in the hill country of Nuwara Eliya
- Guided tour of the fifth-century cliff-top citadel of Sigiriya



FISH CURRY



JETWING BLUE, NEGOMBO

SRI LANKA – THE CULINARY ROAD WITH GEOFF JANSZ

Sunday 2 October to Saturday 15 October 2016

**Sunday 2 October: Arrive Colombo**

Arrive in Colombo and transfer to your hotel in Negombo. The rest of the day is at leisure.

Monday 3 October: Negombo

An optional half-day city tour to the Colombo residence of renowned Sri Lankan architect Geoffrey Bawa. Later, meet Geoff Jansz and your travelling companions for a beach reception and welcome dinner.

Tuesday 4 October: Cultural Triangle

Breakfast poolside, then a visit to Lellama Fish Market to buy fish for a cooking class with Geoff. Travel to the Cultural Triangle and your rural retreat set in paddy fields.

Wednesday 5 October: Cultural Triangle

Learn to cook kiri bath (milk rice) and its associated dishes. Visit a home to try local delicacies. Geoff gives a cooking demo, then visit the fifth-century city of Polonnaruwa.

Thursday 6 October: Cultural Triangle

Visit the cliff-top citadel of Sigiriya, a World Heritage site that's part royal palace and part town. Visit Minneriya National Park for a game drive. Expect good elephant sightings.

Friday 7 October: Sigiriya to Kandy

Visit the World Heritage site of Dambulla and its richly painted cave temples and the spice gardens at Matale, then on to Kandy.

Saturday 8 October: Kandy

Visit the Temple of the Tooth for a Puja ceremony, tour the Royal Botanical Gardens at Peradeniya with a professor of botany, then join Geoff for a cooking class.

Sunday 9 October: Kandy to Nuwara Eliya

Take a train journey through mountains and lush tea estates to Nuwara Eliya.

Monday 10 October: Nuwara Eliya

Join Geoff for a tea experience at a local plantation, then a city tour of Nuwara Eliya.

Tuesday 11 October: Nuwara Eliya to Galle

Drive to seaside Galle, with a picnic en route.

Wednesday 12 October: Galle

See the Sri Lankan stilt fishermen and take a tour of Galle. Later, enjoy cocktails and canapés before a roti dinner.

Thursday 13 October: Galle.

Discover the likes of breadfruit and jackfruit on a guided visit to the markets. Geoff leads a class on classic Sri Lankan curry dishes.

Friday 14 October: Galle to Colombo

Take a tour of Colombo with local Mark Forbes, taking in the Pettah Bazaar, and the 17th-century Old Dutch Museum. Later, a farewell dinner at Ministry of Crab, a restaurant renowned for its crustacean dishes.

Saturday 15 October: Depart Colombo

SIGIRIYA

Explore the idyllic island nation of *Sri Lanka* and experience its culinary traditions with renowned chef and culinary expert Geoff Jansz.

This is an abridged itinerary. Twin share from \$8,475 per person. Single from \$2,560.

Abercrombie & Kent

For more information, visit us at abercrombiekent.com.au/hostedgroups

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Fares are cruise-only, quoted in Australian Dollars, per person, double occupancy, are correct at time of going to print and may rise as the sailing date approaches. Terms & Conditions apply, visit Silversea.com

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EXPEDITIONS



HONOR, PARIS

CAFÉ WATCH

Vive la café révolution

A slew of new cafés is changing Parisians' daily grind. The coffee revolution that has transformed the start of the day in cities such as Melbourne and London has finally surfaced in Paris. To be sure, some of the most stately cafés turn out the over-extracted, overheated swill most Parisians still drink, but, if you know where to go, you can find a coffee that could pass in Sydney or San Francisco. "Le flat white" is now French for coffee.

In fact, there's an antipodean current running through many of the best cafés in Paris. You might hear a familiar accent from behind the bar, and some recognisable options on the menu when you've pushed through the crowds at **Holybelly** – opened by Nico Alary, who worked at Melbourne's Market Lane – on a quiet backstreet off the stylish but still scruffy Canal Saint-Martin (holybel.ly). Or take a seat outside **Fondation Café**, a tiny espresso bar close to the Square du Temple in the Marais, opened by Sydney native Chris Nielson, who pulled shots at Mecca Espresso.

Not that these shops are simply copies of what you find in Australia. Some are in settings so regal and chic they could only be in Paris. There's **Honor**, an exquisitely stark kiosk in the courtyard of the Comme des Garçons building on the rue St-Honoré (honor-cafe.com), and **Café Kitsuné**, a coffee bar in the colonnaded arcade of the Palais Royale (shop.kitsune.fr).

It's that sense of place that sets these cafés apart. The real draw of **Télescope**, where fashion insiders cosy up in a buttercream-coloured room close to the Palais Royale, or **Ten Belles** (tenbelles.com), where the attractively dishevelled spill out onto the street off the Canal Saint-Martin, is that they are populated by the tastemakers who give the city its character. Go for the expertly made coffee, stay for the scene. OLIVER STRAND



FREQUENT SNACKING

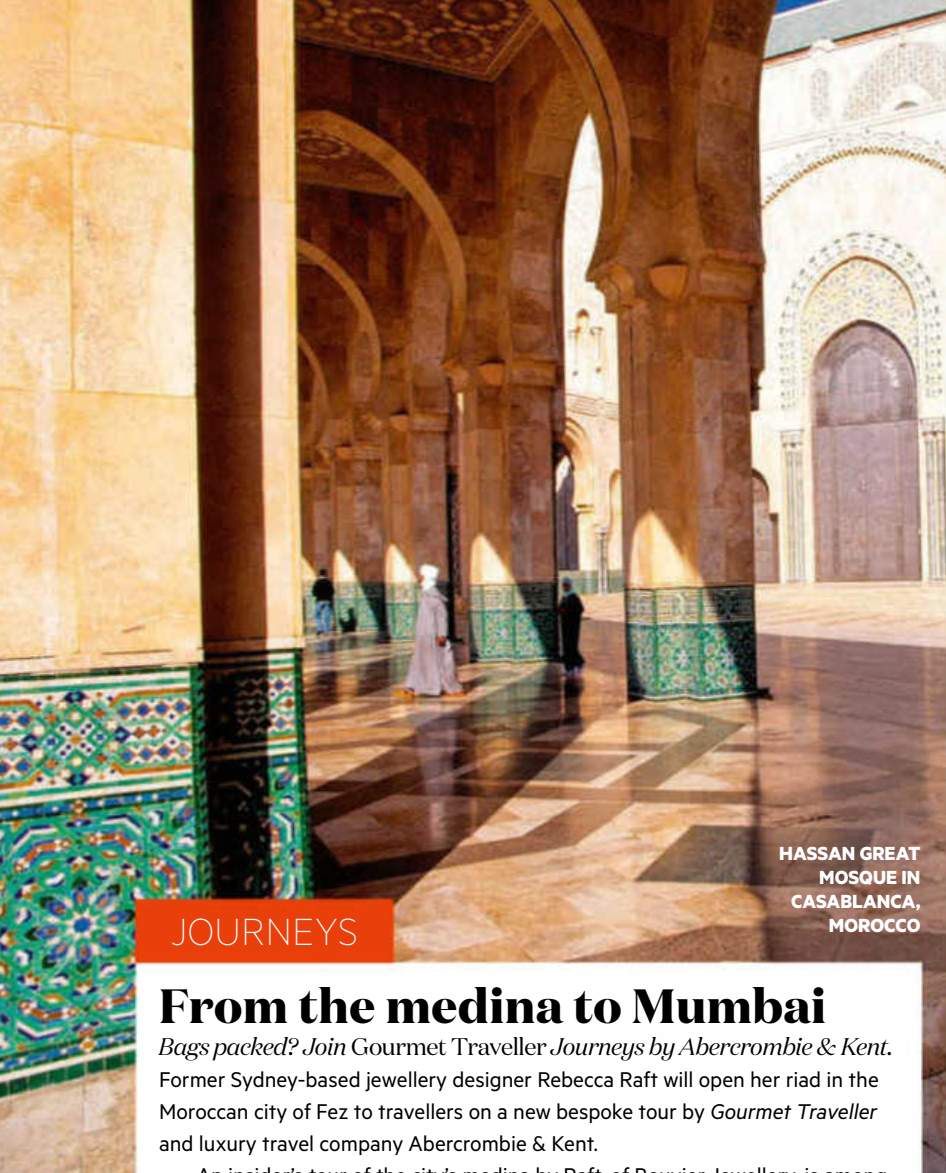
King Valley prosecco with a plate of cured meats, or a Four Pillars G&T alongside Mount Zero olives – Qantas knows that booze without snacks isn't half as much fun, and in recognition of this truism the carrier has introduced food from some of Australia's premier wine regions to match the offerings at Qantas EpiQure, its online wine community for frequent flyers.

Olive oil from Yellingbo in the Yarra Valley, chocolate from Margaret River's Bahen & Co, Bruny Island cheeses, smoked fish and truffles are among more than 50 new food items available.

qantasepiqure.com.au

HERBAL REMEDIES *Jo Malone plundered the herb garden to create five travel-friendly scents in intriguing blends, among them carrot blossom and fennel, and lemon thyme and sorrel. The Herb Garden Collection, 30ml, \$95. jomalone.com.au*





HASSAN GREAT
MOSQUE IN
CASABLANCA,
MOROCCO

JOURNEYS

From the medina to Mumbai

Bags packed? Join Gourmet Traveller Journeys by Abercrombie & Kent. Former Sydney-based jewellery designer Rebecca Raft will open her riad in the Moroccan city of Fez to travellers on a new bespoke tour by *Gourmet Traveller* and luxury travel company Abercrombie & Kent.

An insider's tour of the city's medina by Raft, of Bouvier Jewellery, is among the highlights of small-group tours exploring the culinary and cultural traditions of Morocco as well as India.

In Morocco, the journey begins in Casablanca, and takes in the ancient cities of Chefchaouen, Volubilis, Fez, Meknes and Marrakech. Highlights include a night at a desert camp and private access to the cellars of the Royal Mansour in Marrakech. In India, the flavours of Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Udaipur, Mumbai and Goa are explored in street-food tours, home-cooking classes and fine-diners.

Early birds are rewarded: save \$750 per person, twin share and single, on both itineraries for bookings and deposits by 31 May. The 16-day *Gourmet Traveller Morocco* by A&K tour departs on 24 September and 21 November. If it's booked before 31 May it costs \$12,750 per person twin share including economy international airfares (was \$13,500). The 16-day *Gourmet Traveller India* by A&K tour departs on 9 September and costs \$13,045 per person twin share including airfares if booked early (was \$13,795). 1300 853 428, abercrombieandkent.com.au



SHENZHEN TO SYDNEY

Known as China's Silicon Valley, Shenzhen is a new hub for Guangzhou-based China Southern Airlines, which has launched three direct flights a week from Sydney to the city of 10 million on the northern border of Hong Kong. csair.com/au

MELBOURNE IN STYLE

Emirates has boosted its presence in Melbourne by adding a second daily A380 flight to Dubai this month, replacing an existing flight on a smaller aircraft. As well, the carrier has opened a new lounge at the airport; able to accommodate 241 passengers, it's one of the carrier's largest and follows recent upgrades of Emirates lounges in Perth and Heathrow.



EMIRATES MELBOURNE
LOUNGE

PLANES, TRAINS

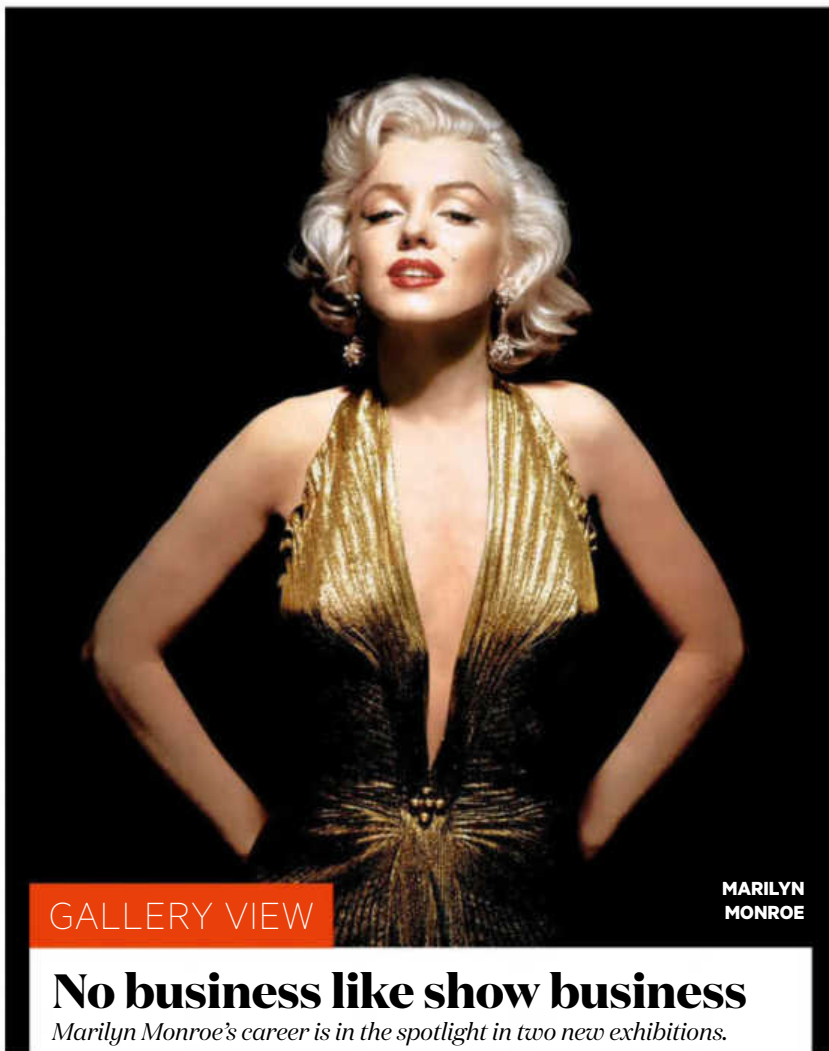
Travellers flying to Italy and France can book seamless air and train travel on Emirates' website with Italy's Trenitalia and France's SNCF, which operates the high-speed TGV trains. Passengers can board trains at Emirates' four Italian ports (Rome, Milan, Bologna and Venice) and at Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris connecting to 19 stations in France. emirates.com/au

IN THE BAG FITNESS TRACKERS

Keep track of your fitness goals with a smart reminder on your wrist.

- 1 **FITBIT** Charge HR, \$229.95. fitbit.com/au
- 2 **JAWBONE** Up3, \$249.99, 247. wearables.com.au
- 3 **MICROSOFT** Band, \$379.99. microsoftstore.com.au
- 4 **MOOV** Now, \$127. harveynorman.com.au
- 5 **GARMIN** VivoSmart HR, \$229. garmin.com.au





GALLERY VIEW

MARILYN
MONROE

No business like show business

Marilyn Monroe's career is in the spotlight in two new exhibitions.

In the central Victorian town of Bendigo, a star is reborn. Norma Jeane Baker, aka the 20th-century screen siren Marilyn Monroe, has come to town thanks to an exclusive alliance between Bendigo Art Gallery and 20th Century Fox.

Showing from 5 March until 10 July, Marilyn Monroe is an attempt, says senior curator Tansy Curtin, "to represent Marilyn the film star, but also Marilyn the person. To put together a fuller picture of this star who is still so important to us today. What is it about her that still entices us?"

Gallery visitors can explore the enduring enigma of Monroe through a diverse show with displays ranging from the mundane – mascara and moisturiser – to the glamorous, such as the Orry Kelly-designed cocktail dress Monroe wore in *Some Like It Hot*, and items from her personal wardrobe.

20th Century Fox approached Bendigo Art Gallery offering access to archival material from a dozen films Monroe made for the studio. Curtin fleshed out the initial offer by raiding private collections to create a fuller picture of the star.

The result is a unique show that traces Monroe's life via studio contracts, portraits and artefacts from her screen and private lives. "There are lots of individual items and lots of stories people can glean from the objects," Curtin says.

The show's opening dovetails with the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival. Events in Bendigo include a regional chapter of the World's Longest Lunch, a musical feast at the Blues Tram & Underground Banquet and a smoking, sizzling showcase of central Victorian meat producers in the botanic gardens.

And in another boon for Marilyn fans and regional galleries, the Murray Art Museum Albury (MAMA) is showing the exhibition Marilyn: Celebrating an Icon until 8 May, featuring paintings, photographs and videos by artists including Andy Warhol and Cecil Beaton. bendigoartgallery.com.au; melbournefoodandwine.com.au; mamaalbury.com.au KENDALL HILL



DOURO RIVER,
PORTUGAL

RIVER RUNS

Two new river-cruise ships will join the **Evergreen Tours** fleet next year: the 138-passenger *Emerald Liberté* and the 112-passenger *Emerald Radiance*. The vessels have been custom-built to sail Evergreen's latest destinations – France's Saône and Rhône rivers and Portugal's Douro River. evergreentours.com.au

RUBENS AT SEA

The most popular museum in the Netherlands will come to life at sea in a new partnership with **Holland America Line**. Reproductions of some of the Rijksmuseum's most famous paintings will be installed throughout the *MS Oosterdam* during its dry dock next month. On-board art workshops and guided presentations from museum staff are also part of the Rijksmuseum at Sea concept, which is expected to roll out across the entire fleet in the next few years. hollandamerica.com

HIGH KICKS AT SEA

The *MSC Meraviglia* and its sister ships, operated by **MSC Cruises**, will add a series of exclusive Cirque du Soleil shows to their entertainment schedules from June next year. The *Meraviglia* will be the first to present the circus and dance spectacular, which will be scheduled twice a night, six nights a week, at a new custom-designed entertainment and dining venue. Its sister ships will launch from 2019. msccruises.com.au

RIISING STAKES

Carnival Corporation has announced a new 135,500-tonne ship will be built specifically to cater to Australia's growing cruise market. Due to launch in 2019, the new **P&O** ship will be the largest cruise ship to make its full-time home port in Australia, and will carry more than 4,200 guests in 2,100 rooms. Itineraries will range between three and 10 days. pocruises.com.au MAGGIE SCARDIFIELD

PAINT THE TOWN Think of it as artistic expression, therapy, or both. Two new titles in the adult colouring genre, by Brady Michaels and Dale Campisi, depict landmarks in Melbourne and Hobart (New South, hbk, \$19.99).





RURAL REVELRY

Farmers, makers and bakers will gather in the gardens at Lake House, in Daylesford, for Macedon's **Regional Producers Day** on 17 April.

The single-day event features shop-talk with producers over a country-style breakfast, market stalls, a tasting tent and cooking demonstrations. In north-east Victoria, join winemakers to celebrate the vintage at the annual **Tastes of Rutherglen**

festival on 12 to 13 March. Surrounded by vines and rose bushes, festival-goers can taste wines by 17 of the region's top makers with matched dishes in a two-day, progressive-style lunch, plus a packed program of dinners, live music and masterclasses. lakehouse.com.au; winemakers.com.au



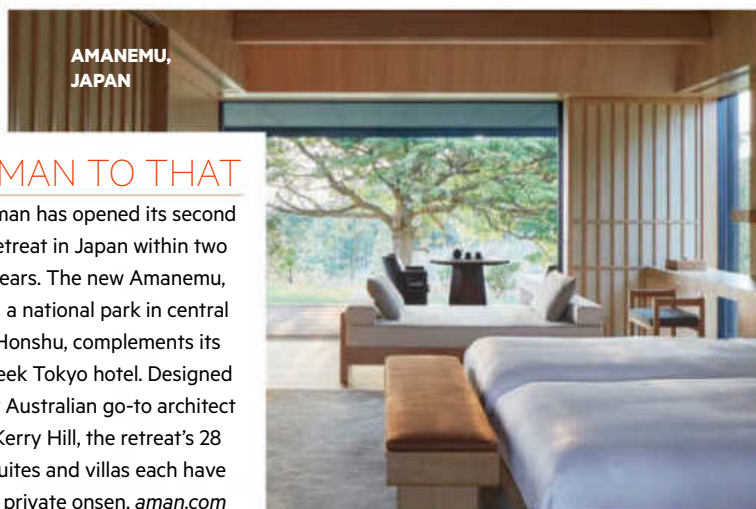
JUPITERS ASCENDING

Nobody does reinvention quite like the Gold Coast, and a case study is the transformation at Jupiters Hotel & Casino.

Epitomising its fresh approach is the lush setting of the new Garden Kitchen & Bar, which couldn't be more different to its predecessor, the dark, British-themed Prince Albert Pub.

The new venue is part of a \$345 million makeover of the casino and hotel, which includes a \$75 million refurbishment of the property's 30-year-old Broadbeach hotel that's currently under way. The property will be renamed The Star, Gold Coast in November. All hotel rooms will be refurbished by the end of the year, including already unveiled ocean terrace suites, high-tech executive rooms and the penthouse. Three other restaurant-bars are also planned. These will join Chase Kojima's acclaimed Japanese fine-diner Kiyomi, and its casual Italian neighbour, Cucina Vivo, which both opened in 2014.

Jupiters' owner, The Star Entertainment Group, is overhauling the property in the lead-up to the 2018 Commonwealth Games, with the construction of a 17-storey, all-suite hotel tower with butler service under way. *Jupiters Hotel & Casino, Broadbeach Island, Broadbeach, Qld, (07) 5592 8100, jupitersgoldcoast.com.au* FIONA DONNELLY



AMANEMU, JAPAN

AMAN TO THAT

Aman has opened its second retreat in Japan within two years. The new Amanemu, in a national park in central Honshu, complements its sleek Tokyo hotel. Designed by Australian go-to architect Kerry Hill, the retreat's 28 suites and villas each have a private onsen. aman.com

VANITY CASE COLOGNES

Five compact colognes to keep you fresh on your next long-haul flight and beyond.

- 1 **LE LABO** Bergamote 22 perfume oil, \$184. mecca.com.au
- 2 **CHANEL** Bleu de Chanel Eau de Toilette refillable spray, \$117 (20ml), includes two refills. davidjones.com.au
- 3 **TOM FORD** Neroli Portofino Forte Eau de Parfum, \$398 (50ml). davidjones.com.au
- 4 **BYREDO** Mojave Ghost Eau de Parfum, \$160 (50ml). mecca.com.au
- 5 **DIOR** Sauvage Eau de Toilette, \$109 (60ml). davidjones.com.au





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Northern sojourn

With distinctive architecture, seriously good coffee and spicy northern Thai food, Chiang Mai rivals Bangkok for attention, writes **Lara Dunston**.



RACHAMANKHA

STAY

Rachamankha

In the sleepy south-west of the old city, this 25-room boutique hotel is owned and operated by renowned Thai architect Ong-ard Satrabhandhu and his stepson, Rooj Changtrakul, an interior designer and antique collector. It features serene palm-shaded courtyards, spacious rooms full of antiques, breezy public lounges, a stunning 20-metre swimming pool and an elegant restaurant serving Burmese and northern Thai dishes. *6 Rachamankha Rd, Soi 9, rachamankha.com*

Tamarind Village

Also in the old city, this atmospheric 45-room hotel

is built around a huge 200-year-old tamarind tree. Clay roof tiles, lime plaster walls and exposed beams evoke traditional architecture of the Lanna kingdom, which ruled northern Thailand some 700 years ago. Vibrant cushions and throws made from hill-tribe textiles enliven whitewashed rooms. Complimentary activities include a walking tour that begins with offerings to monks and a visit to the 14th-century Wat Chedi Luang.

50/1 Rachdamnoen Rd, tamarindvillage.com

DO

Take in the city's sights while learning about traditional Lanna cuisine, which has much in

common with the food of neighbouring Myanmar, Laos and southern China, with the local culinary authorities at **Chiang Mai Food Tours** (*chiangmaifoodtours.com*). Guests sample 10 Lanna specialties, including arguably the city's best khao soi, a coconut-curry noodle soup, and desserts such as kanom sai, coconut and palm sugar steamed in a banana leaf.

DRINK

Chiang Mai has a sophisticated café scene, with many of its best coffee shops owned and operated by Australian-schooled Thai baristas. Double-shot ristretti are standard at **Ristr8to** (15/3 Nimmanhaemin Rd), where former Sydney-based barista Arnon "Tong" Thitiprasert introduced flat whites to Chiang Mai. Lee Ayu Chuepa runs his two **Akha Ama** cafés (175/1 Rachadamnoen Rd and 9/1 Hassadhisawee Rd) as social enterprises that focus on community impact rather than profit, and the citrusy arabica beans are sustainably grown by his Akha hill-tribe. At **Ponganes**, Sydney-trained Rawi "Pong" Kasemsuk roasts his own beans; try his Ocean Blend

sourced from Costa Rica, Colombia and Chiang Mai (133/5 Ratchapakinai Rd). If you can't squeeze into tiny **Graph Café** (Rajvithi, Soi 1), buy a chilled bottle of Karueporn "Tee" Satrabhaya's Graph No 8 cold brew made from Thai single-origin beans, and head to nearby **Graph Table** (8/3 Moonmuang Rd, Soi 6) where Tee's wife, Ajaree, makes her own pasta.

SHOP

The touristy "Walking Street" markets on weekend evenings remain popular for hill-tribe textiles, handicrafts and the ubiquitous elephant pants (Wualai Rd, Saturday; Rachadamnoen Rd, Sunday). Locals gravitate towards the more eclectic shops along "Nimman", as locals call Nimmanhaemin Road, west of the old city. **Think Park** is a cluster of arty little shops, cafés and bars run by young Thai retailers and designers. It's located opposite **Maya Lifestyle Shopping Centre**, which features designer stores, a gourmet supermarket and stylish rooftop bars. The narrow sois, or side streets, off Nimman house even more boutiques, cafés, wine bars and pubs.



Tong Tem Toh

In hip Nimmanhaemin, this cool, casual eatery with polished concrete floors, big wooden tables and a beer garden draws mostly Thais for its inexpensive Lanna food. Order the "hors d'oeuvre" plate with fiery nam prik num (green chilli dip), milder nam prik ong (a tomato pork relish) and herby sai oua pork sausages. *11*

Nimmanhaemin Rd, Soi 13.

Huen Phen

Near Wat Chedi Luang, the city's best-known Lanna restaurant serves delicious northern Thai specialties. Try the moreish naam (fermented pork sausage), sweet tam kanun (young jackfruit salad), and earthy larb khua moo (spicy minced pork and offal salad). By day, customers dine in a rustic annexe, after dark in the cosy dining room cluttered with curios. *112 Ratchamanka Rd, baanhuenphen.com*

Dash Teak House

Run by a mother-son team, Dash is set in a renovated teak house on a quiet lane near Tha Pae Gate. Dash Tevis runs the floor, while his mother Noi oversees the kitchen. Lanna favourites include a rich gaeng hinlay curry of fall-off-the-bone pork. *Moon Muang Rd, Soi 7, dashteakhouse.com*



SAI OUA AT HUEN JAI YONG

PHOTOGRAPHY: TERENCE CARTER

INSIDER TIPS

DON'T MISS

Launched early last year, Ploen Rudee Night Market has more local flavour than the nearby touristy Night Bazaar.

Buy crafts and handmade clothes, then take a seat on a hay bale at a packing-crate table for snacks ranging from tonkatsu to burgers. It's open Monday to Saturday from 4pm. *Chang Klang Rd*

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

The north's finest Lanna food can be found on Chiang Mai's south-east outskirts at rustic Huen Jai Yong, a favourite of chef David Thompson. On a menu written in Thai, highlights include larb pla nin kua (a spicy minced fish salad) and gaeng kanun (pork rib and jackfruit curry). *64 Moo 4, Buak Khang, San Kamphaeng Rd* ●

GETTING THERE Thai Airways and Qantas (codesharing with Bangkok Airways) fly from Sydney to Chiang Mai via Bangkok.





Mountain patrol

Man up for the alpine air and reboot the rugged look with country classics and a dash of contemporary style.

1 Begg & Co "Trevanny" wool and cashmere scarf, \$135, from Mr Porter. **2** Kaufmann Mercantile handmade pewter flask, \$106. **3** Burberry London wool-blend sweater, \$835, from Mr Porter. **4** Omega Speedmaster Co-Axial Chronograph, numbered edition, in titanium, \$11,875. **5** Rick Owens Geobasket leather trainers, \$1,304, from Mr Porter. **6** Cedes Milano bamboo corkscrew, \$580, from Matches Fashion. **7** Acne Studios "Miles" wool beanie, \$190. **8** Louis Vuitton "Christopher PM" backpack in Damier Graphite canvas, \$4,150. **9** Aesop Rolute Hydrating Body Balm, 500ml, \$103. **10** Country Road chinos, \$99.95. **11** Mulberry Clipper leather holdall, \$2,733. **12** Tom Ford cotton shirt, \$911.17, from Mr Porter. *Stockists p183.* ●



Gourmet shopping

They're the flavours of the month, so put these items at the top of your wish list.

1



Ballantyne The spreadable premium dairy range of butter from Australian-made, family-owned company Ballantyne comes with added olive oil or avocado oil to enhance the creamy texture and flavour. ballantyne.com.au

2



Domayne Organise your bathroom or ensuite with this range of minimalist counter-top accessories. As stylish as they are functional, these chic accessories will keep your bathroom tidy and beautiful. From \$19.95. domayne.com.au

3



Winning Appliances Discover the latest in laundry technology. Now, with the Refresh Butler from V-ZUG, your high-quality fabrics can enjoy anti-crease, sanitising and drying treatment at home. winningappliances.com.au

4



Harvey Norman The Beautyrest Black Boston medium queen ensemble combines the Pocketed Coil body support system with a luxuriously soft Cloud Top layer. Priced \$3999. harveynorman.com.au

5



Kailis These "Eclipse" earrings by Kailis make a sophisticated statement with their asymmetrical design in 18ct white gold, subtle diamond details and stunning Australian South Sea pearls. Priced \$6395. kailisjewellery.com.au

6



Penfolds The Penfolds 2014 Max's Cabernet Sauvignon is an expressive South Australian wine celebrating former chief winemaker Max Schubert AM, released as part of the new commemorative Max's range. penfolds.com

7



Parisi LINFA, Newform's new single-control sink mixer collection, brings together energy savings and cleanliness in one eco-friendly product. This eye-catching collection is available in lime, coffee, lemon, white and black. parisi.com.au

8



South Australian Tourism Enjoy an eight-day celebration of world-class eating and drinking, direct from the source in South Australia, at the Tasting Australia Festival, running from 1-8 May. tastingaustralia.com.au

9



Uniworld The Ganges Voyager II sails India's exotic Ganges River from New Dehli to Kolkata on Uniworld's newest itinerary, the 13-day "India's Golden Triangle and the Sacred Ganges". The 2017 season is now open for sale. uniworld.com



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NEXT MONTH

April

Get ready to hit the seas and sail for adventure with our very first cruising special, and things are pretty cruisy back on land, too, with sweet autumn eats.

FOOD

All the fun of buns

Good things, small packages: play it savoury or play it sweet, it's a win either way with these little bundles of joy.

The pasta masters

Tipo 00 has seduced the diners of Melbourne with its superb pasta. Learn the secrets of its sauces and noodles alike in this exclusive.

Basement brasserie

Put a playful spin on French classics with the team from Sydney's sensational new CBD dining hotspot, Hubert.

Fronde regards

Hot and tender under parmesan and cream, slow-roasted with juicy pork, or fresh and bright with green apple and pumpkin seed, fennel has the versatility that makes it perfect for autumn.

TRAVEL

Relaxation pose

Ruth Ritchie dashes from hot yoga on the coast to high tea in the highlands in a time-poor traveller's dream itinerary in Sri Lanka.

Cape crusader

Design entrepreneur Chris Weylandt shares his favourite places in and around Cape Town.

Cruising special

Our team of cruise aficionados has the seven seas covered, plotting courses across oceans and rivers, navigating the latest on-board luxuries, portside surprises and decks of dining options. In short, it's total immersion.

ON SALE 21 MARCH

RECIPE & FOOD STYLING EMMA KNOWLES
PHOTOGRAPHY BEN DEARNLEY STYLING LYNSEY FRYERS-HEDRICK

Sweet cinnamon bun

CINNAMON BUN Teacup
from Mud Australia.
Narrow Eclipse ring
in silver from Sarah &
Sebastian. Stockists p183.

Acne Studios (02) 9360 0294, acnestudios.com
Adairs 1300 783 005, adairs.com.au
Aesop 1300 721 754, aesop.com
Amedei (02) 9699 5600, lario.com.au
Anvers Confectionery (03) 6426 2958, anvers-chocolate.com.au
Bahen & Co (08) 9757 1034, bahenchocolate.com
The Bay Tree (02) 9328 1101, thebaytree.com.au
Becker Minty (02) 8356 9999, beckerminty.com
Belle Fleur (02) 9550 0650, bellefleur.com.au
Bibelot (03) 9690 2688, bibelot.com.au
Bison Australia (02) 6257 7255, bisonhome.com
Burch & Purchase (03) 9827 7060, burchandpurchase.com
Callebaut mayers.com.au
Ciocolato Lombardo (03) 9826 2092, ciocolatolombardo.com
Citta Design 1800 256 723, cittadesign.com
Claypool claypool.com.au
Country Road 1800 801 911, countryroad.com.au
Cuvée by Deniz Karaca (03) 9776 9223, cuveechocolate.com.au
The DEA Store (02) 9698 8150, thedeastore.com
De De Ce (02) 9360 2722, dedece.com
Design Mode International 1800 084 258
Design Twins designtwins.com
Dinosaur Designs (02) 9698 3500, dinosaurdesigns.com.au
Domayne domayneonline.com.au
Emily Ziz Style Studio (02) 9380 4180, emilyziz.com
The Essential Ingredient theessentialingredient.com.au
Flowers at the Farm (02) 6684 8092
The Fortynine Studio thefortynine.com.au
Freedom 1300 135 588, freedom.com.au
Globe West globewest.com.au
Great Dane greatdanefurniture.com
Greene & Greene Antiques greeneandgreene.com.au
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Just Bliss (08) 7225 4872, justbliss.com.au
Kaufmann Mercantile kaufmann-mercantile.com
KitchenAid 1800 990 990, kitchenaid.com.au
Koskela (02) 9280 0999, koskela.com.au
Ladurée (02) 9231 0491, laduree.com.au
Le Creuset 1300 767 993, lecreuset.com.au
Liberty Trading Co libertytradingco.com.au
Liefje liefje.com.au
Life Interiors (02) 9518 4038, lifeinteriors.com.au
Lightly (03) 9348 9520, lightly.com.au



Chicken schnitzel with cabbage and grape salad

Lindsay & Edmunds (02) 9979 2666, lindsayandedmunds.com.au
Lindt lindt.com/au
Louis Vuitton 1300 883 880, louisvuitton.com.au
Luumo Design luumodesign.com
Macleay on Manning (02) 9331 4100, macleayonmanning.com
Mark Tuckey (02) 9997 4222, marktuckey.com.au
Mark Tuckey for Cotton On Home cottonon.com
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Matt Blatt 1300 628 825, mattblatt.com.au
Maxwell & Williams (03) 9318 0466, maxwellwilliams.com.au
Milk & Sugar (03) 9338 1955, milkandsugar.com.au
Monsieur Truffe (03) 9380 4915, monsieurtruffechocolate.com
Mr Kitly (03) 9078 7357, mrkitly.com.au
Mr Porter mrporter.com
Mud Australia (02) 9569 8181, mudaustralia.com
Mulberry mulberry.com
Murielle Vuilleumier (07) 3358 6008, muriellevuilleumier.com
Norton St Grocer (02) 9572 7511, nortonstgrocer.com.au
Omega omegawatches.com
Origin Organic Chocolate Makers originchocolate.com.au
Our Corner Store (02) 6687 1881, ourcornerstore.com.au
Outliving 1300 760 186, outliving.com.au
Papaya (02) 9386 9980, papaya.com.au
Poppy Shop (03) 9347 6302, poppyshop.com.au
Red Cacao (08) 8339 3128, redcacao.com.au
Riedel (02) 9966 0033, riedelglass.com.au
Robert Gordon Australia robertgordonaustralia.com



Super-choc milkshake and salted oat and chocolate cookies

Salt & Pepper 1800 246 987, saltandpepper.com.au
Sarah & Sebastian sarahandsebastian.com
Simon Johnson 1800 655 522, simonjohnson.com.au
Space Furniture (02) 8339 7588, spacefurniture.com.au
Stone etsy.com/au/shop/STONEetsy
Sue Lewis Chocolatier 0452 423 323, suelewischocolatier.com.au
Third Drawer Down (03) 9534 4088, thirddrawerdown.com
Thonet 1800 800 777, thonet.com.au
Top3 by Design 1300 867 333, top3.com.au
Walter-G (02) 8957 2650, walter-g.com.au
Wawa Chocolatier 0409 107 469, wawachocolatier.com.au
West Elm westelm.com.au
Wheel & Barrow wheelandbarrow.com.au
Williams-Sonoma williams-sonoma.com.au
Winnow Chocolates winnowchocolates.com
Workshopped (02) 9146 4353, workshopped.com.au
Zakkia zakkia.com.au
Zokoko 1300 965 656, zokoko.com

FARE EXCHANGE (page 38)

Son in Law 56 Johnston St, Collingwood, Vic, (03) 9410 0399, soninlaw.com.au
Momofuku Seiobo The Star, 80 Pyrmont St, Pyrmont, NSW, seiobo.momofuku.com
Osteria Oggi 76 Pirie St, Adelaide, SA, (08) 8359 2525, osteriaoggi.com.au
Spice Temple Riverside at Crown, 8 Whiteman St, Southbank, Vic, (03) 8679 1888, rockpool.com

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GUIDE TO SYMBOLS

S SIMPLE **G** GLUTEN-FREE
V VEGETARIAN
A CAN BE PREPARED AHEAD

COOK'S NOTES

MEASURES & EQUIPMENT

- * All cup and spoon measures are level and based on Australian metric measures.
- * Eggs have an average weight of 59gm unless otherwise specified.

- * Fruit and vegetables are washed, peeled and medium-sized unless otherwise specified.
- * Oven temperatures are for conventional ovens and need to be adjusted for fan-forced ovens.
- * Pans are medium-sized and heavy-based; cake tins are stainless steel, unless otherwise specified.

COOKING TIPS

- * When seasoning food to taste, we use sea salt and freshly ground pepper unless otherwise specified.
- * To blanch an ingredient, cook it briefly in boiling water, then drain it. To refresh it, plunge it in plenty of iced water (this stops the cooking process), then drain it.
- * We recommend using free-range eggs, chicken and pork. We use female pork for preference.
- * To dry-roast spices, cook the spices in a dry pan, stirring continuously over medium-high heat until they're fragrant. The cooking time varies depending on the spices used.

- * RSPCA Australia's recommendations for killing crustaceans humanely are to first render the animals insensible by placing them in the freezer (under 4C – signs of insensibility are when the tail or outer mouth parts can be moved without resistance); crustaceans must then be killed quickly by cutting through the centreline of the head and thorax with a knife. For crabs, insert a knife into the head. This splitting and spiking destroys the nerve centres of the animal.
- * All herbs are fresh, and both leaves and tender stems are used, unless otherwise specified.
- * Non-reactive bowls are made from glass, ceramic or plastic. Use them in preference to metal bowls when marinating to prevent the acid in marinades reacting with metal and imparting a metallic taste.
- * Eggwash is lightly beaten egg unless otherwise specified, used for glazing or sealing.
- * Sugar syrup is made of equal parts caster sugar and water, unless otherwise specified. Bring the mixture to the boil to dissolve the sugar, remove it from the heat and cool it before use.
- * Acidulated water is a mixture of water and lemon juice; it prevents discolouration.
- * To sterilise jars and lids, run them through the hot rinse cycle in a dishwasher, or wash them in hot soapy water, rinse well, place on a tray in a cold oven and heat at 120C for 30 minutes.
- * To blind bake, line a pastry-lined tart tin with baking paper, then fill it with weights (ceramic weights, rice and dried beans work best).
- * To test whether marmalade, jam or jelly is at setting point, you'll need a chilled saucer (place a couple in the freezer before you start cooking). Remove the pan from the heat, spoon a little mixture onto the saucer and return it to the freezer for 30 seconds, then draw your finger through the mixture – it should leave a trail, indicating that the mixture has reached setting point. If not, cook for another few minutes before testing again. If you prefer, use a sugar thermometer to measure when the mixture reaches 105C; once it does, you can begin testing for setting point.
- * To clarify butter, cook it over low heat until the fat and the milk solids separate. Strain off the clear butter and discard the milk solids. You will lose about 20 per cent of the volume in milk solids.

Gourmet shopping

They're the flavours of the month, so put these items at the top of your wish list.



Charles Tyrwhitt Charles Tyrwhitt is offering 100 per cent cotton shirts for only \$39.95, plus free delivery and returns. Claim the offer and browse the classically stylish men's and women's collections at ctshirts.com.



Raymond Weil The Raymond Weil Toccata possesses a timeless charm. Made entirely of steel, this watch has a white mother of pearl dial and 91 sparkling diamonds set on the case and dial. Available at gregoryjewellers.com.au.



Vitamix Superior engineering meets compact design in the Vitamix S30. It powers through ice and the toughest ingredients to prepare soups, frozen desserts, sauces, dips and smoothies with ease and speed. Priced from \$845. vitamix.com.au



Ted Baker at Myer Ted Baker's "Go to Bed with Ted" collection mixes traditional and contemporary influences with an irreverent sense of humour and quintessential British attitude. The 275-thread-count sets are available at myer.com.au.



Vintec The Vintec Noir 170-bottle wine cabinet features a chic border-less black glass door with no visible handles, making it a sophisticated addition to any style of kitchen, whether modern or classic in its design. vintec.com.au



Temple & Webster Embrace a natural Australian palette when styling your tabletop. Play with eucalyptus-coloured stoneware, timber textures and rose gold cutlery for a relaxed and cool dining setting. templeandwebster.com.au



Jonah's Luxurious and discreet, Jonah's Whale Beach offers 11 rooms with panoramic water views, an award-winning restaurant overlooking the ocean and an exceptional wine list. Find indulgence and wellness packages at jonahs.com.au.



Qantas epiQure Qantas's award-winning wine collection is now complemented by a range of gourmet food, from a variety of wine regions, delivered straight to your door. Earn Qantas points with every purchase. qantasepiqure.com.au



Natuzzi Picturing the Italian-made Tempo sofa in your home can now become a reality. The virtual in-store 3D tour with its innovative Configurator allows you to visualise furniture in your own living room. natuzzi.com.au

No mere truffles

A chocolate hit laced with lush raspberry and cacao crunch ends a meal on a rich note.

Raspberry chocolate truffles

Fresh raspberries add lusciousness to these rich chocolate truffles, while cacao nibs add crunch and texture. You can roll the truffles into balls or shape into rough quenelles with a spoon, as we've done here. Toss them directly into rich Dutch-process cocoa, or, for another layer of texture, roll first in melted chocolate and then into the cocoa. Store in the fridge in an airtight container for up to two weeks – although we doubt they'll last that long.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 5 mins (plus chilling)

Makes about 20

- 200 ml pouring cream
- 30 ml raspberry liqueur, such as Framboise or Chambord
- 340 gm dark chocolate (55%-65% cocoa solids), finely chopped
- 100 gm raspberries, coarsely crushed
- 2 tbsp cacao nibs (see note)
- Dutch-process cocoa, sieved, for coating

1 Bring cream and liqueur just to the boil in a saucepan over medium-high heat, then remove from heat, add chocolate, stand for 5 minutes, then whisk until smooth. Add raspberries and cacao nibs, stir to combine, pour into a container and refrigerate until chilled and firm (4-5 hours).

2 Roll heaped teaspoonfuls of mixture into balls, or shape into rough quenelles with two dessert spoons dipped in hot water. Toss straight into cocoa, roll to coat, then transfer to a container and refrigerate until required.

Note Cacao nibs are available from select health-food shops and supermarkets. ●

TRUFFLES

Linen tablecloth and napkin from Hale Mercantile Co. Cup and saucer from Mud Australia. All other props stylists own. Stockists p183.

RECIPE & STYLING EMMA KNOWLES
PHOTOGRAPHY WILLIAM MEPPEN

A man with short hair and black-rimmed glasses, smiling, is surrounded by a massive pile of snails. He is holding a handful of snails in each hand. The background is a dense, textured wall of snail shells.

64,000 snails and one fat duck



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